VIGNETTES OF MANHATTAN

BY
BRANDER
MATTHEWS

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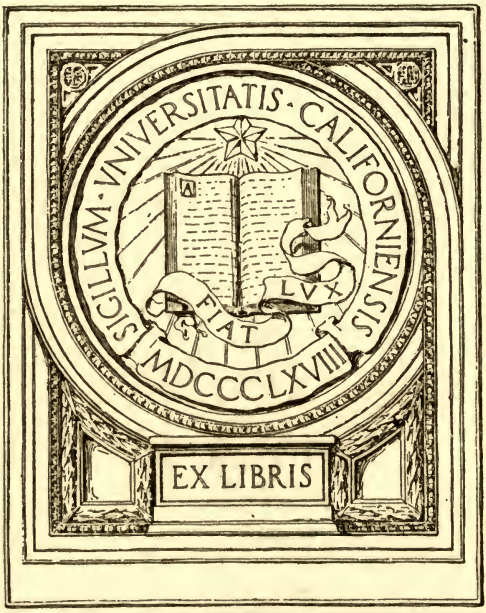

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"MR. RUPERT DE RUYTER COULD NOT BE KEPT AWAY FROM HIS OWN PORTRAIT"

Vignettes of Manhattan

BY

BRANDER MATTHEWS

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK
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BOOKS BY BRANDER MATTHEWS.

THE THEATRES OF PARIS.
FRENCH DRAMATISTS OF THE 19TH CENTURY.
THE LAST MEETING, a Story.
A SECRET OF THE SEA, and Other Stories.
PEN AND INK: Essays on Subjects of More or Less Importance.
A FAMILY TREE, and Other Stories.
WITH MY FRIENDS: Tales Told in Partnership.
A TALE OF TWENTY-FIVE HOURS.
TOM PAULDING, a Story for Boys.
IN THE VESTIBULE LIMITED, a Story.
AMERICANISMS AND BRITICISMS, with Other Essays on Other Isms.
THE STORY OF A STORY, and Other Stories.
THE DECISION OF THE COURT, a Comedy.
STUDIES OF THE STAGE.
THIS PICTURE AND THAT, a Comedy.
VIGNETTES OF MANHATTAN.
THE ROYAL MARINE, an Idyl of Narragansett.

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TO

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

My dear Theodore,—You know—for we have talked it over often enough—that I do not hold you to be a typical New-Yorker, since you come of Dutch stock, and first saw the light here on Manhattan Island, whereas the typical New-Yorker is born of New England parents, perhaps somewhere west of the Alleghanies. You know, also, that often the typical New-Yorker is not proud of the city of his choice, and not so loyal to it as we could wish. He has no abiding concern for this maligned and misunderstood town of ours; he does not thrill with pride at the sight of its powerful and irregular profile as he comes back to it across the broad rivers; nor is his heart lifted up with joy at the sound of its increasing roar, so suggestive and so stimulating. But we have a firm affection for New York, you and I, and a few besides; we like it for what it is; and we love it for what we hope to see it.

It is because of this common regard for our strange and many-sided city that I am giving myself the pleasure of proffering to you this little volume of vignettes. They are not stories really, I am afraid—not sketches even, nor studies; they are, I think, just what I have called them—vignettes. And there are a dozen of them, one for every month in the year, an urban calendar of times and seasons. Such as they are, I beg that you will accept them in token of my friendship and esteem; and that you will believe me, always,

Yours truly,

BRANDER MATTHEWS

New York, *May*, 1894

419443

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At the Little Church

THE little church stands back from the street, with a scrap of lawn on either side of the path that winds from the iron gate to the church door. On this chill January morning the snow lay a foot deep on the grass-plots, with the water frozen out of it by the midnight wind. The small fountain on one side was sheathed with ice; and where its tiny spirtle fell a glittering stalagmite was rising rapidly, so the rotund sparrows had difficulty in getting at their usual drinking-trough. The sky was ashen, yet there was a hope that the sun might break out later in the morning. A sharp breeze blew down the street from the river, bearing with it, now and again, the tinkle of sleigh-bells from the Avenue, only fifty yards away.

There was the customary crowd of curious idlers gathered about the gate as the hearse drew up before it. The pall-bearers alighted from the carriages which followed, and took up their positions on the sidewalk, while the undertaker's assistants were lifting out the coffin. Then the bareheaded and gray-haired rector came from out the church porch, and went down to the gate to

meet the funeral procession. He held the prayer-book open in his hand, and when he came to the coffin he began to read the solemn words of the order for the burial of the dead:

"I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die."

Preceding the pall-bearers the rector led the way to the church, which was already filled with the dead actor's comrades and with his friends, and with mere strangers who had come out of curiosity, and to see actresses by daylight and off the stage. The interior was dusky, although the gas had been lighted here and there. The Christmas greens still twined about the pillars, and still hung in heavy festoons from the low arched roof. As the coffin passed slowly through the porch, the rector spoke again:

"We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord."

Throughout the church there was a stir, and all heads were turned towards the entrance. There were tears in the eyes of more than one man, for the actor had been a favorite, and not a few women were weeping silently. In a pew near the door were two young actresses who had been in the same company with the dead man when he had made his first appearance on the stage, only three

THE FUNERAL

years before; and now, possessed by the emotion of the moment, these two sobbed aloud. By their side stood a tall, handsome, fair-haired woman, evidently not an actress; she was clad in simple black; she gave but a single glance at the coffin as it passed up the aisle, half hidden by the heaped-up wreaths of flowers, and then she stared straight before her, with a rigid face, but without a tear in her eye.

Slowly the rector preceded the pall-bearers up the central aisle of the church, while the vestured choir began the stately anthem:

"Lord, let me know my end, and the number of my days; that I may be certified how long I have to live.

"Behold, thou hast made my days as it were a span long, and mine age is even as nothing in respect of thee; and verily every man living is altogether vanity."

It was for a young man that this solemn anthem was being sung—for a man who had died in his twenty-fifth year, at the moment of his first success, and when life opened temptingly before him. He bore a name known in American history, and his friends had supposed that he would be called to the bar, like his father and his grandfather before him. He was a handsome young fellow, with a speaking eye and a rich, alluring voice; and his father's friends saw in him a moving advocate. But the year he was graduated from college his father had died, and

his mother also, and he was left alone in the world. As it happened, his father's investments were ill-advised, and there was little or no income to be hoped from them for years. In college he had been the foremost member of the dramatic club, and in the summer vacations he had taken part in many private theatricals. Perhaps it had always been his secret wish to abandon the bar for the stage. While he was debating the course he should take, chance threw in his way the offer of an engagement in the company which supported a distinguished tragedian. He had accepted what opportunity proffered, and it was not as a lawyer but as an actor that he had made his living; it was as an actor that his funeral was now being held at "the little church down the street."

While the choir had been singing the anthem, the coffin had been borne to the chancel and set down before the rail, which was almost concealed from sight by the flowers scattered about the steps and clustering at the foot of the pulpit and in front of the reading-desk. The thick and cloying perfume of the lilies was diffused throughout the church.

The rector had taken his place at the desk in the chancel to read the appointed lesson, with its message of faith and love. There were sobs to be heard when he declared that this mortal shall put on immortality.

"Then shall be brought to pass the saying that

is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

There were those present — old friends of his boyhood, come from afar to give the dead man the last greeting of affection — who knew how high had been his hopes when he went upon the stage; and they knew also how hard that first year had been, with the wearisome drudgery of his apprenticeship, with the incessant travelling, with ambition baffled by lack of opportunity. Some of them were aware how the second year of his career in the theatre had seen a change in his fortunes, and how discouragement had given place to confidence. There had been dissensions in the company to which he belonged, and the tragedian had parted with the actor who played the second parts. Here was a chance for the young man, and he proved himself worthy of the good-fortune. No more youthful and fiery Laertes had been seen for years, no more passionate Macduff, no more artful and persuasive Mark Antony. He had the gifts of nature—youth, and manly beauty, and the histrionic temperament; and he had also the artistic intelligence which made the utmost out of his endowment. Before the end of his second season on the stage he was recognized as the most promising actor of his years. He had played Mark Antony for the first time only twelve months before; and now he lay there in his coffin, and the little church was filled with the actors and

actresses of New York who had come to bid him farewell.

When the rector had finished the reading of the lesson there was a hush throughout the church. A faint jingle of sleigh-bells came floating down from the Avenue.

A few straggling rays of sunshine filtered through the windows on the right side of the little church, and stained with molten colors the wood-work of the pews on the left. There was a movement among the members of the vestured choir, and a large and stately woman took her stand before the organ; she was the contralto of a great opera company, and it was with skill and power and feeling that she sang "Rock of Ages."

In a pew between the organ and the pulpit sat a slight, graceful, dark-eyed and dark-haired woman, young still and charming always, although the freshness had faded from her face. This was the celebrated actress with whom the dead man had been acting only a week before. She was the ideal Juliet — so the theatre-goers thought — and never before had she been aided by so gallant and so ardent a Romeo. Never before had the tragedy been produced with so much splendor, and with dramatic effect so certain and so abundant. Never before had "Romeo and Juliet" been performed for a hundred and fifty nights without interruption. And for once the critics had been in accord with the public, so potent was the glamour of youth and beauty and

"AND THEN SHE STARED STRAIGHT BEFORE HER"

passion. It was a joy to all discerning lovers of the drama to see characters so difficult interpreted so adequately. Thus it was that the tragedy had been played for five months to overflowing audiences; and its prosperity had been cut short only by the death of the fiery wooer—of the Romeo who lay now in the coffin before the chancel, while the Juliet, with the tears gliding down her cheeks, sat there by the side of the middle-aged merchant she was soon to marry. The young actor, to catch a glimpse of whom silly schoolgirls would watch the stage door, and to whom foolish women sent baskets of flowers, now lay cold in death, with lilies and lilacs in a heap over his silent heart.

When the final notes of the contralto's rich and noble voice had died away, the rector went on with the ritual:

"Man, that is born of a woman, hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay."

The dead man had been the last of his line, and there were no near kindred at the funeral. There was no mother there, no sister, no wife. Friends there were, but none of his blood, none who bore his name. Yet there was a shiver of sympathy as the tiny clods of clay rattled down upon the coffin lid, and as the rector said "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

Then the service drew to an end swiftly, and

the pall-bearers formed in order once again, and the coffin was lifted and carried slowly down the aisle.

As the sorrowful procession drew near to the open door and passed before the pew where the tall fair-haired woman stood, stolid, with averted head, and a stare fixed on the floor, one of the bearers stumbled, but recovered himself at once. The woman had raised her hand, and she had checked a cry of warning; but the coffin was borne before her steadily; and they who bore it little guessed that they were carrying it past the dry-eyed mother of the dead man's unborn child.

(1893.)

The Twenty-ninth
of February

THE Governor of the State and his secretary had just finished their lunch in one of the private parlors of the hotel. The Governor lighted his cigar and leaned back in his chair as the secretary went to the door and admitted an old man who had been patrolling the corridor impatiently.

"The Governor will see you now, Mr. Baxter," said the secretary.

The old man, tall, thin, and impetuous, strode past the secretary without a word of thanks, and came straight to where the Governor was sitting.

"At last!" he cried—"at last I've got a chance to talk to you face to face. If you only knew how I have longed for this, you would have let me in before."

"Take a seat, Mr. Baxter," said the Governor, kindly.

"Thank you, but I'd rather stand," replied the old man. "In fact, I'd rather walk. I don't seem to be able to sit nor to stand when I get a-talking about the boy. You know why I wanted to see you, I suppose?" he inquired, suddenly, fixing the Governor with a penetrating stare.

"You wish to urge your son's pardon, I take it," the Governor answered; "and I am ready to listen to you. I have all the papers here," and he indicated a bundle of documents at his elbow. "I have just been reading them."

"But the men who wrote those papers didn't know my boy as I know him, and they can't tell you about him as I can tell you. He's in jail, and he's been there nearly three years, and he's twenty-four years old to-day—for to-day's his birthday—but he's only a boy for all that. He isn't a man yet, to be judged as a man, and to take a man's punishment. I can't tell you that he didn't shoot the fellow, for he did; but he did it in his anger, and he was sorely tempted; and what's more, he did it in self-defence. Oh, I know that wasn't brought out on the trial, but just you read this," and he tore open his coat and pulled out a package of papers; selecting one of them, he thrust it into the Governor's hands. "That's from the man who sold Bowles a pistol and a knife on the 28th of February, the day before the fight. Then you read this too," and he picked out a second letter, and gave that to the Governor with the same impatient and imperious gesture. "That's from one of Bowles's friends, the fellow who was with him just before the shot was fired. He kept quiet at the trial, and said as little as he could. He knew that I was sick abed, and so he held his peace. But I've been at him ever since I got about again, and

now I've pinned him down. And there's the result; the truth must prevail in the end always. There, in that letter, he says that Bowles had that pistol on his person on the morning of the 29th; and that if it wasn't found on the body, it was because Bowles dropped it as he fell. The pistol was picked up that night under a plank in the sidewalk. It was this same friend of Bowles's who found it then, and he said nothing—the cur! Even at the trial he said nothing! But I knew he had something to say, and at last I made him speak. He's telling the truth now, and the whole truth. Read the letter and see if it isn't. He hated my boy; and he said he wanted to see him swing; but I made him write that letter. And if that isn't enough, I'll put him on the stand, and I'll make him swear to every word of it."

The Governor adjusted his glasses, and began to read the letters thus forcibly placed in his hands.

In his eagerness to be heard, the old man could not brook even this delay, and as the Governor laid down the first letter, he broke forth again: "To-day's his birthday, the first he's had since the shooting, the first that he's ever spent away from me. He was born on the 29th of February, and he has a birthday only once in four years; and it was just four years ago to-day that he got into this scrape, and fired the shot that caused us all this trouble. He was twenty years old that morning, for he was born in 1864; that was the

year when General Grant was getting ready to smash Jeff Davis and the rebels ; that's why we called him Grant—out of gratitude for the saving of the country. Sometimes I think it's a pity he hadn't been born twenty years before, so that he could have died at Cold Harbor like a man, without ever having seen the inside of a jail. But it was to be, I suppose. Our lives are laid out for us, I suppose. Maybe a boy born on the 29th of February is different from other boys ; I don't know. He was loved more than most boys ; I know that well enough. I was raised on Cape Cod, and my father never gave me a caress ; though I guess he loved me, too, in his way. But I moved out to Lake Erie when I was married, and out by the edge of the lake we waited, my wife and I, for a man-child to be born to us. And we waited a score of years and more ; and when Grant came at last, he was our only child. Both his sisters had died in their cradles. So he was the son of our old age. Maybe we spoiled him. Surely we spared the rod. Why, we loved him too much ever to say a hard word to him. In the main he was a good boy, too—wild at times, and skittish—but always loving and easily led. His mother had only to look, and he'd jump to serve her. So we let him do as he pleased, and most generally he pleased us. Perhaps I gave him too much rope ; I've often thought so, now I see how near he came to hanging himself. But he was a good boy, and devoted to his mother

always. And she loved him—oh! how she loved him!—more than she loved her husband, I know, fond as she was of me."

Here the old man paused in his vehement speech, and turned away abruptly.

"Is Mrs. Baxter with you here in the city?" the Governor asked, gently.

"Here—in the city?" cried the old man, facing about sharply. "She's at home—in the cemetery! That's where she is. She drooped as soon as ever he was arrested, but she bore up till the trial was over, hoping that he might get off somehow, not believing that her boy could be found guilty. But when he was sent off to Auburn to serve fifteen years for manslaughter, why, then there wasn't anything left for her to live for any longer, with all the joy of her life locked up in a stone cell. So she took to her bed, and she died. She faded away; she had lost her interest in life, and so she gave up. Now the boy's all I have, and I want you to give him back to me. That's what I've come down here for. That's what I've been pursuing you for these six months. The boy is all I have. I want to see him back at the old home on the lake before I die — and I can't live much longer, I guess. I'm seventy now, and for all I look hale and hearty, there's something the matter with my heart, the doctors say, and I may go out any time, like a candle in a gale of wind. Well, give me back the boy, and I'm ready to die. Let me see him at home once more, a free

man, and I'll carry the good news to the old woman whenever the call comes, and gladly."

He paused for a moment, and his impassioned speech had lost a little of its fierce fire.

The Governor took up the second letter and began to read it. The movement of the Governor's hand as he raised the paper aroused the old man again.

"If the District Attorney had done his duty by the people of the State it wouldn't have been left for me to wring the truth out of that coward whose letter you are reading. Sometimes I half think this cur was at the bottom of the whole thing. It was he who introduced Grant to the woman. You know that the wedding was to have taken place that very night — the night of the shooting? Yes, it all came out on the trial. Grant only had one birthday in four years, as I've been telling you, and so he persuaded the girl to set it as the wedding-day too. And he was just twenty—a mere boy. It was no wonder they took advantage of him. If you've read the report you can see how she deceived him. Even the District Attorney admitted that, bitter as he was against the boy. Ah! if I could only have been in court at the trial! If I had only been in town the day when the boy discovered the truth, he wouldn't have shot that villain, for I'd have done it myself."

"Then who would have come to me to ask for your pardon?" inquired the Governor, smiling

kindly. "I have read these letters, but they contain nothing that is new to me, and—"

"Nothing new?" interrupted the old man, violently. "That letter shows that Grant fired in self-defence, since the fellow had a pistol in his hand. Isn't that something new?"

"Not to me, for the District Attorney—against whom you seem to have a prejudice, Mr. Baxter —had already informed me of this."

"If you've been listening to him, I suppose there isn't much hope of my getting what I'm after," the old man returned, hotly; "for no man ever spoke more unfairly against another than that man did against my boy."

"You do him injustice," the Governor said, firmly. "He did his duty at the trial in pressing for sentence, and he has done his duty now in laying before me this newly discovered evidence. He has even gone further: he has urged me to accede to your request for your son's pardon."

"The District Attorney?" cried the old man in surprise.

"Yes," the Governor replied.

"Then his conscience has pricked him at last."

"And it is chiefly in consequence of his recommendation that I have decided to pardon your son," the Governor continued.

"I don't care on whose urging it is, so long as it's done," the old man rejoined. "When can the boy come out?" he asked, eagerly.

"I will let you bear the pardon to him," said

the Governor, and he unfolded one of the papers which lay on the table by his side and signed it. "Here it is."

The old man seized the paper with a convulsive clutch. His knees trembled as his eyes read the pardon swiftly.

The door of the parlor opened, and the secretary returned.

The old man grasped his hat. "Do you know when the next train leaves for Auburn?" he inquired, hastily.

"There's one at four o'clock, I think," the secretary answered.

"I shall be in time," said the old man; and then, the pardon in his twitching fingers, he left the parlor without another word. He passed quickly through the corridors of the hotel, down the stairs, and out into the street. When he reached the pavement he stood still for a moment and bared his head, quite unconscious of the rainstorm which had broken but a minute before.

A small boy came running to him across the street, crying, "Evening papers — four o'clock *Gazette!*"

Seemingly the old man did not hear him.

"Terrible loss of life!" the newsboy shrilled out, as he moved away. "Riot at Auburn! Attempted escape of the prisoners!"

Then a clutch of iron was fastened on the newsboy's arm, and the old man towered above him, asking hoarsely: "What's that you say? A

loss of life in the prison at Auburn? Give me the paper!"

He seized it. On the first page was a despatch from Auburn stating that there had been a rising of the convicts at the State-prison, which the wardens had been able to repress after it had gained headway. The prisoners had yielded and gone back to their cells only after the wardens had fired on them, wounding half a dozen and killing the ringleader, who had fought desperately. He was a young man from one of the lake villages, sentenced to fifteen years for manslaughter; his name was Grant Baxter.

As the old man read this, the paper slipped from his fingers, and he fell on the sidewalk dead, still tightly grasping the pardon.

(1889.)

At a Private View

WHEN the Spring Exhibition opened, March had thrown off its lion's skin, and stood revealed as a lamb. There was no tang to the wind that swept the swirling dust down the broad street; and the moonlight which silvered the Renascence front of the building had no longer a wintry chill. Flitting clouds were thickening, and threatened rain; but the carriages, rolling up to the canvas tunnel which had been extemporized across the sidewalk, brought many a pretty woman who had risked a spring bonnet. Not a few of the ladies who had been bidden to the Private View were in evening dress; and it was a brilliant throng which pressed down the broad corridor, past the dressing-rooms, and into the first gallery, where the President of the Society, surrounded by other artists of renown, stood ready to receive them.

Beyond the first gallery, and up half a dozen steps, was a smaller saloon, with a square room yet smaller to its right and to its left. Still farther beyond, and up a few more steps, was the main gallery, a splendid and stately hall, lofty and well proportioned, and worthy of the many

fine paintings which lined its walls two and three deep. In the place of honor, facing the entrance, was Mr. Frederick Olyphant's startling picture, "The Question of the Sphinx," which bore on its simple frame the bit of paper declaring that it had received a silver medal at the Salon of the summer before. In a corner was another painting by the same artist, a portrait of his friend Mr. Laurence Laughton ; and balancing this, on the other side of a landscape called "A Sunset at Onteora," was a portrait of Mr. Rupert de Ruyter, the poet, by a young artist named Renwick Brashleigh, painted vigorously yet sympathetically, and quite extinguishing the impressionistic "Girl in a Hammock," which hung next to it. Here and there throughout the spacious room there were statuettes and busts ; one of the latter represented Astroyd, the amusing comedian. Landscapes drenched with sunshine hung by the side of wintry marines ; and delicate studies of still life set off purely decorative compositions painted almost in monochrome.

The people who thronged the floor were well-nigh as various as the paintings which covered the walls. There were artists in plenty, men of letters and men about town, women who lived for art and women who lived for society, visitors of both sexes who came to see the exhibition, and visitors of both sexes who came to be seen themselves. There were art-students and art-critics, picture-buyers and picture-dealers, poets and nov-

"PEOPLE WHO THRONGED THE FLOOR WERE WELLNIGH AS VARIOUS AS THE PAINTINGS"

elists, stock-brokers and clergymen. Among them were Mr. Robert White, of the *Gotham Gazette*, and Mr. Harry Brackett, formerly attached to that journal; Mr. Rupert de Ruyter, who could not be kept away from his own portrait; Mr. Delancey Jones, the architect, with his pretty wife; Mr. J. Warren Payn, the composer; Mr. and Mrs. Martin, of Washington Square; and Miss Marlenspuyk, an old maid, who seemed to know everybody and to be liked by everybody.

Miss Marlenspuyk lingered before Olyphant's portrait of Laurence Laughton, whom she had known for years. She liked the picture until she overheard two young art-students discussing it.

"It's a pity Olyphant hasn't any idea of color, isn't it?" observed one.

"Yes," assented the other; "and the head is hopelessly out of drawing."

"The man has a paintable face, too," the first rejoined. "I'd like to do him myself."

"Olyphant's well enough for composition," the second returned, "but when it comes to portraits, he simply isn't in it with Brashleigh. Seen his two yet?"

"Whose?" inquired the first speaker.

"Brashleigh's," was the answer. "Biggest things here. And as different as they make 'em. Best is a Wall Street man — Poole, I think, his name is."

"I know," the first interrupted. "Cyrus Poole; he's president of a big railroad somewhere out

West. Lots of money. I wonder how Brashleigh got the job?"

"Guess he did Rupert de Ruyter for nothing. You know De Ruyter wrote him up in one of the magazines."

The two young art-students stood before the portrait a few seconds longer, looking at it intently. Then they moved off, the first speaker saying, "That head's out of drawing too."

It gave Miss Marlenspuyk something of a shock to learn that the heads of two of her friends were out of drawing; she wondered how serious the deformity might be; she felt for a moment almost as though she were acquainted with two of the startlingly abnormal specimens of humanity who are to be seen in dime museums. As these suggestions came to her one after the other, she smiled gently.

"I don't wonder that you are laughing at that picture, Miss Marlenspuyk," said a voice at her right. "It's no better than the regulation 'Sunset on the Lake of Chromo,' that you can buy on Liberty Street for five dollars, with a frame worth twice the money."

Miss Marlenspuyk turned, and recognized Mr. Robert White. She held out her hand cordially.

"Is your wife here?" she asked.

"Harry Brackett is explaining the pictures to her," White answered. "He doesn't know anything about art, but he is just as amusing as if he did."

"'MR. J. WARREN PAYN, THE COMPOSER'"

"I like Mr. Brackett," the old maid rejoined. "He's a little—well, a little common, I fear; but then he is so quaint and so individual in his views. And at my time of life I like to be amused."

"I know your fondness for a new sensation," White returned. "I believe you wouldn't object to having the devil take you in to dinner."

"Why should I object?" responded Miss Marlenspuyk, bravely. "The devil is a gentleman, they say; and besides, I should be so glad to get the latest news of lots of my friends."

"Speaking of the gentleman who is not as black as he is painted," said White, "have you seen the portrait of Cyrus Poole yet? It is the best thing here. I didn't know Brashleigh had it in him to do anything so good."

"Where is it?" asked Miss Marlenspuyk. "I've been looking at this Mr. Brashleigh's portrait of Mr. De Ruyter, and—"

"Pretty little thing, isn't it?" White interrupted. "Perhaps a trifle too sentimental and saccharine. But it hits off the poet to the life."

"And life is just what I don't find in so many of these portraits," the lady remarked. "Some of them look as though the artist had first made a wax model of his sitter and then painted that."

They moved slowly through the throng towards the other end of the gallery.

"Charley Vaughn, now, has another trick," said White, indicating a picture before them with a slight gesture. "Since he has been to Paris and

studied under Carolus he translates all his sitters into French, and then puts the translation on canvas."

The picture White had drawn attention to represented a lady dressed for a ball, and standing before a mirror adjusting a feather in her hair. It was a portrait of Mrs. Delancey Jones, the wife of the architect.

Miss Marlenspuyk raised her glasses, and looked at it for a moment critically. Then she smiled. "It is the usual thing, now, I see," she said—"intimations of immorality."

White laughed, as they resumed their march around the hall.

"If you say that of Charley Vaughn's picture," he commented, "I wonder what you will say of Renwick Brashleigh's. Here it is."

And they came to a halt before the painting which had the place of honor in the centre of the wall on that side of the gallery.

"That is Cyrus Poole," White continued. "President of the Niobrara Central, one of the rising men of the Street, and now away in Europe on his honeymoon."

The picture bore the number 13, and the catalogue declared it to be a "Portrait of a Gentleman." It was a large canvas, and the figure was life size. It represented a man of barely forty years of age, seated at his desk in his private office. On the wall beyond him hung a map of the Niobrara Central Railroad with its branches.

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"MR. DELANCEY JONES, THE ARCHITECT, WITH HIS PRETTY WIFE"

The light came from the window on the left, against which the desk was placed. The pose was that of a man who had been interrupted in his work, and who had swung around in his chair to talk to a visitor. He was a man to be picked out of a crowd as unlike other men, rather spare, rather below medium height, rather wiry than muscular. Beyond all question he was energetic, untiring, determined, and powerful. The way he sat indicated the consciousness of strength. So did his expression, although there was no trace of conceit to be detected on his features. His hair was dark and thick and straight, with scarce a touch of gray. He had a sharp nose and piercing eyes, while his lips were thin and his jaw massive.

Miss Marlenspuyk looked at the picture with interest. "Yes," she said, "I don't wonder this has made a hit. There is something striking about it — something novel. It's a new note; that's what it is. And the man is interesting too. He has a masterful chin. Not a man to be henpecked, I take it. And he's a good provider, too, judging by the eyes and the mouth; I don't believe that his wife will ever have to turn her best black silk. There's something fascinating about the face, but I don't see how—"

She interrupted herself, and gazed at the picture again.

"Is it a good likeness?" she asked at last, with her eyes still fixed on the portrait.

"It's so like him that I wouldn't speak to it," White answered.

"I see what you mean," the old lady responded. "Yes, if the man really looks like that, nobody would want to speak to him. I wouldn't have this artist—what's his name?—Mr. Brashleigh?—I wouldn't have him paint my portrait for the world. Why, if he did, and my friends once saw it, there isn't one of them who would ever dare to ask me to dinner again."

White smiled, and quickly responded, "As I said before, you know, even the gentleman you wanted to take you in to dinner is probably not as black as he is painted."

"But I wouldn't want that man to take me in to dinner," returned Miss Marlenspuyk, promptly, indicating the portrait with a wave of her hand. "Paint is all very well; besides, it is only on the outside, and women don't mind it; but it is that man's *heart* that is black. It is his inner man that is so terrible. He fascinates me—yes—but he frightens me too. Who is he?"

"I told you," White answered. "He is Mr. Cyrus Poole, the president of the Niobrara Central Railroad, and one of the coming men in the Street. He turned up in Denver ten years ago, and when he had learned all that Denver had to teach him he went to Chicago. He graduated from the Board of Trade there, and then came to New York; he has been here two years now, and already he has made himself felt. He has engi-

neered two or three of the biggest things yet seen in the Street. As a result there are now two opinions about him."

"If this portrait is true," said the old maid, "I don't see how there can be more than one opinion about him."

"There were three at first," White rejoined. "At first they thought he was a lamb; now they know better. But they are still in doubt whether he is square or not. They say that the deal by which he captured the stock of the Niobrara Central and made himself president had this little peculiarity, that if it hadn't succeeded, instead of being in Europe on his honeymoon, Cyrus Poole would now be in Sing Sing. Why, if half they said about him at the time *is* true — instead of hanging here on the line, he ought to have been hanged at the end of a rope. But then I don't believe half that I hear."

"I could believe anything of a man who looks like that," Miss Marlenspuyk said. "I don't think I ever saw a face so evil, for all it appears frank and almost friendly."

"But I have told you only one side," White went on. "Poole has partisans who deny all the charges against him. They say that his only crime is his success. They declare that he has got into trouble more than once trying to help friends out. While his enemies call him unscrupulous and vindictive, his friends say that he is loyal and lucky."

Miss Marlenspuyk said nothing for a minute or more. She was studying the portrait with an interest which showed no sign of flagging. Suddenly she looked up at White and asked, "Do you suppose he knows how this picture affects us?"

"Poole?" queried White. "No, I imagine not. He is a better judge of values as they are understood in Wall Street than as they are interpreted at the Art Students' League. Besides, I've heard that he was married and went to Europe before the picture was quite finished. Brashleigh had to paint in the background afterwards."

"The poor girl!" said Miss Marlenspuyk. "Who was she?"

"What poor girl?" asked the man. "Oh, you mean the new Mrs. Cyrus Poole?"

"Yes," responded the old lady.

"She was a Miss Cameron," White answered; "Eunice Cameron, I think her name was. I believe that she is a cousin of Brashleigh's. By-the-way, I suppose that's how it happened he was asked to paint this portrait. He is one of the progressive painters a Wall Street man wouldn't be likely to appreciate off-hand. But it couldn't have been given to a better man, could it?"

Miss Marlenspuyk smiled.

"Well," said White, "Brashleigh has a marvellous insight into character; you can see that for yourself. Or at least he paints portraits as if he had; it's hard to tell about these artists, of

"SHE OVERHEARD TWO ART STUDENTS DISCUSSING"

course, and it's easy to credit them with more than they have. They see so much more than they understand; they have the gift, you know, but they can't explain; and half the time they don't know what it is they have done."

The old lady looked up and laughed a little.

"I think the man who painted that," she said, "knew what he was about."

"Yes," White admitted, "it seems as though no one could do a thing with the astounding vigor of this, unconsciously. But, as like as not, what Brashleigh thought about chiefly was his drawing and his brush-work and his values; probably the revelation of the sitter's soul was an accident. He did it because he couldn't help it."

"I don't agree with you, for once," Miss Marlenspuyk replied. "I find in this portrait such an appreciation of the possibilities of human villany. Oh, the man *must* have seen it before he painted it!"

"It's lucky I'm not a painter by trade," returned White, "or I should feel it my duty to annihilate you on the spot by the retort that laymen always look at painting from the literary side."

Miss Marlenspuyk did not respond for a minute. She was looking at the portrait with curious interest. She glanced aside, and then she gazed at it again.

"Poor girl!" she said at last, with a gentle sigh.

"Meaning Mrs. Poole?" White inquired.

"Yes," the old lady answered. "I'm sorry for her, but I think I understand how she had to give in. I can feel the sinister fascination of that face myself."

Above the babble of many tongues which filled the gallery there was to be heard a rumble of thunder, and then the sharp patter of rain on the huge skylight above them.

"Excuse me, Miss Marlenspuyk," said White, hastily, "but my wife is always a little nervous about thunder now. I must look her up. I'll send you Harry Brackett."

"You needn't mind about me," she answered, as he moved away. "I've taken care of myself for a good many years now, and I think I'm still equal to the task."

The hall was densely crowded by this time, and it was becoming more and more difficult to make one's way in any given direction. The rain fell heavily on the roof, and dominated the rising murmur of the throng, and even the shrill voices now and again heard above it.

Miss Marlenspuyk drifted aimlessly with the crowd, looking at the pictures occasionally, and listening with interest to the comments and the fragmentary criticisms she could not help hearing on all sides of her. She found herself standing before Mr. Charles Vaughn's "Judgment of Paris," when she was accosted by Harry Brackett.

"I've been looking for you everywhere, Miss

Marlenspuyk," he began. "White said you were here or hereabouts, and I haven't seen you for many moons."

They chatted for a few minutes about their last meeting, and the friends at whose house they had dined.

Then Harry Brackett, looking up, saw the huge painting before them.

"So Charley Vaughn's 'Judgment of Paris' is a Salon picture, is it?" he asked. "It looks to me better fitted for a saloon. It's one of those nudes that Renwick Brashleigh says are offensive alike to the artist, the moralist, and the voluptuary."

Miss Marlenspuyk smiled; and her smile was one of her greatest charms.

"Do you know Mr. Brashleigh?" she asked.

"I've known him ever since he came back from Paris," Brackett answered. "And he's a painter, he is. He isn't one of those young dudes who teach society girls how to foreshorten the moon. You don't catch him going round to afternoon teas and talking about the Spontaneity of Art."

"Have you seen his portrait of this Mr. Poole?" she inquired.

"Not yet," he replied, "but they tell me it's a dandy. I've never met Poole, but I used to know his wife. She was Eunice Cameron, and she's a cousin of Brashleigh's. Come to think of it, his first hit was a portrait of her at the Academy three years ago."

"What sort of a girl is she?" Miss Marlenspuyk asked.

"For one thing, she's a good-looker," he responded, "although they say she's gone off a little lately; I haven't seen her this year. But when Brashleigh introduced me to her she was a mighty pretty girl, I can tell you."

The pressure of the crowd had carried them along, and now Miss Marlenspuyk found herself once more in front of the "Portrait of a Gentleman," and once more she was seized by the power and by the evil which the artist had painted on the face of Cyrus Poole.

"They used to say," Harry Brackett went on, not looking at the picture, "that Brashleigh was in love with her. I think somebody or other once told me that they were engaged."

There was a sudden gleam of intelligence in Miss Marlenspuyk's eyes.

"But of course there wasn't any truth in it," he continued.

The smile came back to the old maid's mouth as she gazed steadily at the portrait before her and answered, "Of course not."

(1893.)

Spring
in a Side Street

IN the city the spring comes earlier than it does in the country, and the horse-chestnuts in the sheltered squares sometimes break into blossom a fortnight before their brethren in the open fields. That year the spring came earlier than usual, both in the country and in the city, for March, going out like a lion, made an April-fool of the following month, and the huge banks of snow heaped high by the sidewalks vanished in three or four days, leaving the gutters only a little thicker with mud than they are accustomed to be. Very trying to the convalescent was the uncertain weather, with its obvious inability to know its own mind, with its dark fog one morning and its brisk wind in the afternoon, with its mid-day as bright as June and its sudden chill descending before nightfall.

Yet when the last week of April came, and the grass in the little square around the corner was green again, and the shrubs were beginning to flower out, the sick man also felt his vigor returning. His strength came back with the spring, and restored health sent fresh blood coursing through his veins as the sap was rising in the

branches of the tree before his window. He had had a hard struggle, he knew, although he did not suspect that more than once he had wrestled with death itself. Now his appetite had awakened again, and he had more force to withstand the brooding sadness which sought to master him.

The tree before his window was but a shabby sycamore, and the window belonged to a hall bedroom in a shabby boarding-house down a side street. The young man himself lay back in the steamer chair lent him by one of the few friends he had in town, and his overcoat was thrown over his knees. His hands, shrunken yet sinewy, lay crossed upon a book in his lap. His body was wasted by sickness, but the frame was well knit and solid. His face was still white and thin, although the yellow pallor of the sick-bed had gone already. His scanty boyish beard that curled about his chin had not been trimmed for two months, and his uncut brown hair fell thickly on the collar of his coat. His dark eyes bore the mark of recent suffering, but they revealed also a steadfast soul, strong to withstand misfortune.

His room was on the north side of the street, and the morning sun was reflected into his window, as he lay back in the chair, grateful for the warmth. A heavy cart lumbered along slowly over the worn and irregular pavement; it came to a stand at the corner, and a gang of workmen swiftly emptied it of the steel rails it contained, drop-

ping them on the sidewalk one by one with a loud clang which reverberated harshly far down the street. From the little knot of men who were relaying the horse-car track came cries of command, and then a rail would drop into position, and be spiked swiftly to its place. Then the laborers would draw aside while an arrested horse-car urged forward again, with the regular footfall of its one horse, as audible above the mighty roar of the metropolis as the jingle of the little bell on the horse's collar. At last there came from over the house-tops a loud whistle of escaping steam, followed shortly by a dozen similar signals, proclaiming the mid-day rest. A rail or two more clanged down on the others, and then the cart rumbled away. The workmen relaying the track had already seated themselves on the curb to eat their dinner, while one of them had gone to the saloon at the corner for a large can of the new beer advertised in the window by the gaudy lithograph of a frisky young goat bearing a plump young goddess on his back.

The invalid was glad of the respite from the more violent noises of track-layers, for his head was not yet as clear as it might be, and his nerves were strained by pain. He leaned forward and looked down at the street below, catching the eye of a young man who was bawling "Straw-b'rees! straw-b'rees!" at the top of an unmelodious voice. The invalid smiled, for he knew that the street venders of strawberries were an infallible sign of

spring—an indication of its arrival as indisputable as the small square labels announcing that three of the houses opposite to him were "To Let." The first of May was at hand. He wondered whether the flower-market in Union Square had already opened; and he recalled the early mornings of the preceding spring, when the girl he loved, the girl who had promised to marry him, had gone with him to Union Square to pick out young roses and full-blown geraniums worthy to bloom in the windows of her parlor looking out on Central Park.

He thought of her often that morning, and without bitterness, though their engagement had been broken in the fall, three months or more before he was taken sick. He had not seen her since Christmas, and he found himself wondering how she would look that afternoon, and whether she was happy. His revery was broken by the jangling notes of an ill-tuned piano in the next house, separated from his little room only by a thin party-wall. Some one was trying to pick out the simple tune of "Wait till the Clouds roll by." Seemingly it was the practice hour for one of the children next door, whose playful voices he had often heard. Seemingly also the task was unpleasant, for the piano and the tune and the hearer suffered from the ill-will of the childish performer.

A sudden hammering of a street rail in the street below notified him the nooning was over,

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"SEEMINGLY IT WAS THE PRACTICE-HOUR FOR ONE OF THE CHILDREN NEXT DOOR"

and that the workmen had gone back to their labors. Somehow he had failed to hear the stroke of one from the steeple of the church at the corner of the Avenue, a short block away. Now he became conscious of a permeating odor, and he knew that the luncheon hour of the boarding-house had arrived. He had waked early, and his breakfast had been very light. He felt ready for food, and he was glad when the servant brought him up a plate of cold beef and a saucer of prunes. His appetite was excellent, and he ate with relish and enjoyment.

When he had made an end of his unpretending meal, he leaned back again in his chair. A turbulent wind blew the dust of the street high in the air and set swinging the budding branches of the sycamore before the window. As he looked at the tender green of the young leaves dancing before him in the sunlight he felt the spring-time stir his blood; he was strong again with the strength of youth; he was able to cope with all morbid fancies, and to cast away all repining. He wished himself in the country — somewhere where there were brooks and groves and grass— somewhere where there were quiet and rest and surcease of noise—somewhere where there were time and space to think out the past and to plan out the future resolutely—somewhere where there were not two hand-organs at opposite ends of the block vying which should be the more violent, one playing "Annie Laurie" and the other "An-

nie Rooney." He winced as the struggle between the two organs attained its height, while the child next door pounded the piano more viciously than before. Then he smiled.

With returning health, why should he mind petty annoyances? In a week or so he would be able to go back to the store and to begin again to earn his own living. No doubt the work would be hard at first, but hard work was what he needed now. For the sake of its results in the future, and for its own sake also, he needed severe labor. Other young men there were a plenty in the thick of the struggle, but he knew himself as stout of heart as any in the whole city, and why might not fortune favor him too? With money and power and position he could hold his own in New York; and perhaps some of those who thought little of him now would then be glad to know him.

While he lay back in the steamer chair in his hall room the shadows began to lengthen a little, and the long day drew nearer to its end. When next he roused himself the hand-organs had both gone away, and the child next door had given over her practising, and the street was quiet again, save for the high notes of a soprano voice singing a florid aria by an open window in the Conservatory of Music in the next block, and save also for an unusual rattle of vehicles drawing up almost in front of the door of the boarding-house. With an effort he raised himself, and saw a line of carriages on the other side of the way, moving slowly

"HE WISHED HIMSELF IN THE COUNTRY"

towards the corner. A swirling sand-storm sprang up again in the street below, and a simoom of dust almost hid from him the faces of those who sat in the carriages—young girls dressed in light colors, and young men with buttoned frock-coats. They were chatting easily ; now and again a gay laugh rang out.

He wondered if it were time for the wedding. With difficulty he twisted himself in his chair and took from the bureau behind him an envelope containing the wedding-cards. The ceremony was fixed for three. He looked at his watch, and he saw that it lacked but a few minutes of that hour. His hand trembled a little as he put the watch back in his pocket ; and he gazed steadily into space until the bell in the steeple of the church at the corner of the Avenue struck three times. The hour appointed for the wedding had arrived. There were still carriages driving up swiftly to deposit belated guests.

The convalescent young man in the little hall bedroom of the shabby boarding-house in the side street was not yet strong enough to venture out in the spring sunshine and to be present at the ceremony. But as he lay there in the rickety steamer chair with the old overcoat across his knees, he had no difficulty in evoking the scene in the church. He saw the middle-aged groom standing at the rail awaiting the bride. He heard the solemn and yet joyous strains of the wedding-march. He saw the bride pass slowly up the aisle

on the arm of her father, with the lace veil scarcely lighter or fairer than her own filmy hair. He wondered whether she would be pale, and whether her conscience would reproach her as she stood at the altar. He heard the clergyman ask the questions and pronounce the benediction. He saw the new-made wife go down the aisle again on the arm of her husband. He sighed wearily, and lay back in his chair with his eyes closed, as though to keep out the unwelcome vision. He did not move when the carriages again crowded past his door, and went up to the church porch one after another in answer to hoarse calls from conflicting voices.

He lay there for a long while motionless and silent. He was thinking about himself, about his hopes, which had been as bright as the sunshine of spring, about his bitter disappointment. He was pondering on the mysteries of the universe, and asking himself whether he could be of any use to the world—for he still had high ambitions. He was wondering what might be the value of any one man's labor for his fellow-men, and he thought harshly of the order of things. He said to himself that we all slip out of sight when we die, and the waters close over us, for the best of us are soon forgotten, and so are the worst, since it makes little difference whether the coin you throw into the pool is gold or copper—the rarer metal does not make the more ripples. Then, as he saw the long shafts of almost level sunshine sifting

"DISTRACTED BY THE CROSSING SHOUTS OF LOUD-VOICED MEN"

through the tiny leaves of the tree before his window, he took heart again as he recalled the great things accomplished by one man. He gave over his mood of self-pity; and he even smiled at the unconscious conceit of his attitude towards himself.

He was recalled from his long revery by the thundering of a heavy fire-engine, which crashed its way down the street, with its rattling hose-reel tearing along after it. In the stillness that followed, broken only by the warning whistles of the engine as it crossed avenue after avenue farther and farther east, he found time to remember that every man's struggle forward helps along the advance of mankind at large; the humble fireman who does his duty and dies serves the cause of humanity.

The swift twilight of New York was almost upon him when he was next distracted from his thoughts by the crossing shouts of loud-voiced men bawling forth a catchpenny extra of a third-rate evening paper. The cries arose from both sides of the street at once, and they ceased while the fellows sold a paper here and there to the householders whose curiosity called them to the door-step.

The sky was clear, and a single star shone out sharply. The air was fresh, and yet balmy. The clanging of rails had ceased an hour before, and the gang of men who were spiking the iron into place had dispersed each to his own home. The

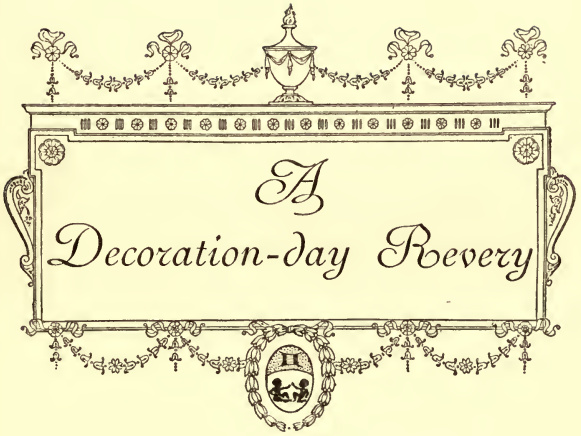
day was drawing to an end. Again there was an odor of cooking diffused through the house, heralding the dinner-hour.

But the young man who lay back in the steamer chair in the hall bedroom of the boarding-house was unconscious of all except his own thoughts. Before him was a picture of a train of cars speeding along moonlit valleys, and casting a hurrying shadow. In this train, as he saw it, was the bride of that afternoon, borne away by the side of her husband. But it was the bride he saw, and not the husband. He saw her pale face and her luminous eyes and her ashen-gold hair; and he wondered whether in the years to come she would be as happy as if she had kept her promise to marry him.

(1893.)

CALIFORNIA

"THE BRIDE OF THAT AFTERNOON"


A
Decoration-day Revery

THERE had been a late spring, set off by frequent rain; and when Decoration Day dawned there was a fresh fairness of foliage, as though Nature were making ready her garlands for our honored dead. When at length the march began, the sunshine sifted through the timid verdure of the trees in the square, and fell softly on the swaying ranks that passed beneath. The golden beams glinted from the slanting bayonets, and seemed to keep time with the valiant old war-tunes as they swelled up from the frequent bands. There was a contagion of military ardor in the air, and even the small boy who had climbed up into the safe eyry of a dismantled lamp-post had within him inarticulate stirrings of warlike ambition. In the pauses of the music fifes shrilled out, and the roll and rattle of drums covered the rhythmic tramping of the soldiers. I lingered for a while near the noble statue of the great admiral, who stood there firm on his feet, with the sea-breeze blowing back the skirt of his coat, and so presented by the art of the sculptor that the motionless bronze seemed more alive than most of the ordinary men and women

who clustered about its base. Here, I thought, was the fit memorial of the man who had done his duty in the long struggle, to the heroes of which the day was sacred; and I was glad that the marching thousands should pass in review before that mute image of the best and bravest our country can bring forth. At that moment a detachment of sailors swung into view, and cheers of hearty greeting broke forth on all sides.

As I loitered, musing, a battalion of our little army strode by us in turn, with soldierly bearing, clad in no gaudy garb, but ready for their bloody work; ready with cold steel to give a cold welcome to the invading foreigner, ready with a prompt volley to put an end to lawless strife at home. After an interval came the first ranks of the citizen soldiery, trim in their workmanlike uniforms, with stretchers, with ambulances, with Gatling-guns. One after another advanced the regiments of the city militia, and no man need doubt that they would be as swift now to go forward to battle as were their former fellow-members whose deeds gave them the right to bear flags emblazoned with more than one battle as hard fought as Marathon or Philippi, Fontenoy or Waterloo. As they swept on down the Avenue in the morning sunlight, with the strident music veiled now and again by ringing cheers, my thoughts went back to the many other thousands I had seen go down that Avenue, now more than

a quarter of a century ago, coming from the pine forests and the granite hills of New England, and going to the silent swamps and the dark bayous of the South. In those drear days of doubt I had watched the ceaseless tramp of the troops down that Avenue, a thousand at a time—young, earnest, ardent; and I remembered that I had seen them return but a scant hundred or two, it may be, worn and ragged, foot-sore and heart-sick, but resolute yet and full of grit. Death, like the maddened peasants in the strife of the Jacquerie, fights with a scythe; and for four long years Time held a slow glass and Death mowed a broad swath. There is many a house now where an old woman cannot hear the trivial notes of "Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are marching," without a sharp pain in the throat and a sudden vision of the prison-pen at Andersonville. No doubt there is many another woman south of that Mason and Dixon's line which was washed out in the blood of the war where the sentimental strains of "My Maryland" have an equal poignancy and an equal tenderness. Shiloh and Malvern Hill and Gettysburg are names made sacred forever by the deeds done there, and by the dead who lie there side by side in a common grave, where the gray cloth and the blue have faded into dust alike, and there is now naught to tell them apart. It is well that a spring day, fresh after rain and fair with blossoms, should help to keep their memory sweet.

Down the Avenue regiment after regiment went on briskly, with the easy pace of health and enjoyment. After the young men of the militia came the veterans, with flowers for their fallen comrades. Some of the older men were in carriages, with here and there a crutch across the seat; but for the most part they walked, keeping time, no doubt, though with a shorter stride. As a handful of brave men filed before us, bearing aloft the tattered remnant of a battle-flag, I raised my hat with instinctive reverence. For a moment the gesture shielded my eyes from the rays of the sun, and I caught sight of a group in the window of a house opposite. A lady, tall and stately, wearing a widow's cap above her gray hair as though it were a crown, stood in the centre with her hands on the shoulders of two young men—her sons, beyond all question — stalwart young fellows, with features at once fine and strong, bearing themselves with manly grace. I looked, and I recognized. When I lowered my eyes again to the procession I saw another set of faces that I knew by sight. In a carriage sat a man of some fifty years, stout, vulgar, with a cigar alight in the coarse hand which rested on the door of the vehicle. He had a shock of hair, once reddish and now grizzling to an unclean white. He wore in his button-hole the button of the Grand Army of the Republic. In the open barouche with him were three youngish men, noisy in laughter—apparently professional politicians of the baser sort.

The man bowed effusively, with a broad and unctuous smile, when he saw a friend on the sidewalk; and the crowd about me recognized him, and called him by name one to another; and a little knot of young fellows on the corner raised a cheer.

I knew both groups, the unclean creature in the carriage and the noble lady in the window above him. I knew that both were survivals of the war.

As the procession passed on, I could hear an occasional cheer run along the line of spectators when one or another recognized the politician. I was not surprised, for the man's popularity with a portion of the people is patent to all of us. He was a soldier who had never fired a shot, a colonel who had never seen the enemy. His tactical skill had been shown in the securing of a detail for himself where there was chance of profit with no risk of danger. His strategy had been to secure the good word of those who dispensed the good things of life.

While others were battling for the country he was looking out for himself. When the war was over he presented his claims for recognition, and he was sent as consul to the Orient. In due time there came across the ocean rumors of scandals, and an investigation was ordered; whereupon he resigned, and the matter was never probed. Then he went into politics: he was ready of speech and loud-mouthed; he flattered the mob, believing that in politics the blarney-stone is the stepping-

stone to success. He never paused to weigh his words when he assailed an opponent, believing that in politics billingsgate is the gate of success. He was prompt to set people by the ears that he might lead them by the nose the more readily. As though to make up for his delinquencies during the struggle, he was now untiring in his abuse of the Southern people, and his denunciation of them was always violent and virulent. In every election he besought his fellow-citizens to vote as they had shot. He was unfailingly bitter in his abuse of those who had fought for the cause of the South. He was, in short, a specimen of the scum which may float on the surface whenever there is an upheaval of the deep.

Brutal in political debate and brazen in political chicanery, he was a fit leader for the band of hirelings he had organized with no small skill. His position was not unlike that of the *condottieri* of the foreign mercenaries in the mediæval quarrels of the Italian republics. Like them, he led a compact body, prompt to obey orders so long as it received the pay and had hopes of the plunder for which it was organized. Although he belonged nominally to one of the two great parties which contended for the control of the nation, he was always ready to turn his forces against it if his pay and his proportion of the spoils of office failed to satisfy himself and his men-at-arms; or even in revenge for a slight, and in hope of higher remuneration from the other side.

For me, as I stood on the corner under Farragut's statue and watched the veterans file past, the knowledge of this man's career, and the sight of his presence among those who had fought a good fight for a high motive, seemed to tarnish the sacred occasion and to stain the glory of the morning. Again I looked up at the window where I had seen the lady with her two sons. She was still there, leaning forward a little, as though in involuntary excitement, and one hand clinched the arm of the soldierly young fellow at her right. The sight of those three refreshed me, for I knew who they were, and what they stood for in the history of our country—a shining example in the past and a beacon of hope for the future. The widow's cap which crowns the brow of that mother brought up before me the memory of a deed as noble as it was simple.

A fife-and-drum corps of boys dressed as sailors preceded a model of a monitor mounted on wheels and artfully adorned with flowers and wreaths. Behind this came the scanty score of old sailors who had formed themselves into Post Rodman R. Hardy. When they came abreast of the window where the lady stood with her two sons, they looked up and cheered. The eyes of Captain Hardy's widow had filled with tears when she caught sight of his old comrades; and when they cheered her and her boys her face flushed and the arm which rested on her son's trembled. She bowed, the two young men raised their hats, and

the Post passed on down the Avenue to perform their sad office; though they might not deck with flowers the grave of their old commander, for he lies buried at the bottom of the sea, and great guns were firing many a salute with shot and shell when his body was lowered into its everlasting resting-place.

I have heard it said that a soldier's trade is learning how to kill and how to die, and that how he lives is little matter. Captain Hardy lived like a man, like a gentleman, like a Christian; and he died like a hero. He came of a generation of sailors. His great-grandfather had sailed with the fleet under Amherst when Louisburg was taken in 1758. His grandfather had been a midshipman with Paul Jones in the *Bonhomme Richard.* His father served on "Old Ironsides" when the *Constitution* captured the *Guerrière.* He himself had gone to sea in time to take part in the siege of Vera Cruz. When the war broke out he had been married but three years. He was on the *Cumberland* when the *Merrimac* sank her. While the new monitors were building he had a few brief weeks with his wife and his two baby boys. When the *Onteora* was finished he was a captain, and he was appointed to take command.

And there was no monitor which did better service or had more hard work than the *Onteora.* Just before the grand attack on Fort Davis he ran under the guns of a Confederate battery to shell

a cruiser which had retreated up the river behind the strip of land on which the earthworks stood. Regardless of the fire from the battery, which bade fair to hammer his ship till it might become unmanageable, he trained his guns on the cruiser. He had no more than got the range when a fog settled down and hid the combatants from each other. The battery ceased firing or aimed wildly a few chance shots. The monitor, relying on the accuracy of its gunners, continued to send shell after shell through the thick wall of fog to the invisible place where the enemy's ship lay. When the fog lifted, the cruiser was on fire; and then the monitor fell back out of the range of the guns of the battery, having done the work Captain Hardy had set it to do.

The next day came the grand assault on Fort Davis. The admiral ordered the *Onteora* to follow the flag-ship in the attack. The channel was defended not only by the cannon of the fort itself and of its supporting earthworks and by a flotilla of gunboats, but also by hidden torpedoes, the position of which was wholly unknown even to the pilots, Union men of the port who had volunteered to guide our vessels through the tortuous windings of the entrance. The iron ship was made ready for battle; its deck was sunk level with the surface of the sea; and nothing projected but the revolving turret, with its two huge guns. In the little box of a pilot-house Captain Hardy took his place with the pilot. The admiral

gave the signal to advance, and the *Onteora* followed in the wake of the flag-ship.

The first turning of the channel was made safely, and the monitor was at last full under the fire of the fort. The turret revolved slowly, and both guns were discharged against a pert gunboat which had ventured out beyond the protection of the fort. The second shot struck the steam-chest of the gunboat, and it blew up and drifted at the mercy of the current. Still the admiral advanced, and the *Onteora* followed. Then a sudden shock was felt, there was a dull roar, the monitor shivered from stem to stern, and began to settle. A torpedo had blown a hole in the bottom of the boat, and the *Onteora* was sinking. Almost at the same time a shot from Fort Davis struck the turret, and a fragment smote Captain Hardy and tore off his right arm. In the scant seconds after the explosion of the torpedo, before the shuddering ship lurched down, half a score of men escaped from the turret and flung themselves into the river. The captain had barely time to climb into the open air when his ship went down beneath him. When he arose from the vortex of whirling waters his unwounded hand grasped a chance fragment of wood, which served to sustain him despite the weakness from his open wound. He found himself by the side of the pilot, who was struggling vainly with the waves, his strength almost spent.

"Can't you swim?" asked Captain Hardy.

"Only a little," answered the pilot; "and I am almost gone now, I fear."

"Take this bit of wood," said the sailor.

The pilot reached out his arm and with despairing fingers gripped the broken plank. It was too small to support two men, and Captain Hardy released his hold. He sought to sustain himself with one hand, and for a little he succeeded. Then his strength failed him, and at last he went under almost where the *Onteora* had sunk beneath him. The battle raged above; shell from ship after ship answered shell from the fort and the batteries; another ironclad took up the work of the *Onteora;* brave hearts and quick heads were at work on sea and on shore; but Rodman Hardy was dead at the bottom of the river, leaving to his widow and his sons the heritage of a manly death.

The widow's cap which the young wife took that night she has never discarded to this day. His sons she has brought up to follow in their father's footsteps. One has already begun to make his mark in the navy, having been graduated from Annapolis, high up in his class. The other is a lawyer, who is solving for himself the problem of the scholar in politics. Although not yet thirty, he has spent two terms in the Legislature of the State, where he has done yeoman service for the city.

The parade was over at last—for the Rodman R. Hardy Post had been one of the latest in

line — and I turned away across the square. The sight of the widow with her two sons had cleansed the atmosphere from the miasma that trailed behind the politician as he rode by me in his vulgar barouche. The memory of a great deed is an oasis in the vista of life, and the recollection of Captain Hardy's death made the day seem fairer. The sunshine flooded the streets with molten gold. A pair of young sparrows flitted across the park before me and alighted on a bough above my head. From over the housetops came floating echoes of "John Brown's Body" and "Marching through Georgia."

(1890.)

In Search of Local
Color

THE novelist stood at the corner of Rivington Street and the Bowery, trying to find fit words to formulate his impression of the most characteristic of New York streets as it appeared on a humid morning in June. The elevated trains clattered past over his head and he gave no heed to them, so intent was he in making a mental record of the types which passed before him. Suddenly he was almost thrown off his feet. A young man, slipping on the peel of a banana cast away carelessly upon the sidewalk, had stumbled heavily against him.

"I beg your pardon," cried the young man as he recovered himself. "I—why, Mr. De Ruyter!" he exclaimed, recognizing the author.

"John Suydam!" returned Rupert de Ruyter, holding out his hand cordially. "Well, this is good-fortune! Do you know, I was on my way to the University Settlement to look you up."

"You would have found me there in ten minutes," Suydam answered. "This is my week to be in residence; in fact, I think I shall be here for the summer now. You see, I passed my A.M. examination at Columbia last week—"

"So they examine you for it now, eh?" the novelist queried. "In my time we got it almost for the asking—at least, I did—and that was only twenty years ago. What are you going to do with it, now you've got it? I heard you were to study for the ministry."

"I had thought of the Church," answered Suydam. He was a tall, spare young fellow, with straight brown hair and a resolute chin. "But I don't know now what I shall do. I have a little money, you know—enough to live on, if I choose. So I may stay here at the Settlement; the work is very interesting."

"No doubt," the novelist responded, readily; "you must see many curious cases. I wish I could cut loose for a while, and spend a month with you here."

"Why don't you?" suggested Suydam, eagerly.

"Oh, I have too much on hand," De Ruyter replied. "I've got to read the Phi Beta Kappa poem at Harvard next week; and besides, I've promised to finish a series of New York stories for the *Metropolis*. That is why I was on my way to find you this morning. I want you to help me."

"But I never wrote a story in my life," said the young man, promptly.

"I don't want you to write the stories," De Ruyter retorted. "Of course I can do that for myself. But I thought that you could help me to a little local color."

AT RIVINGTON STREET AND THE BOWERY

"Local color?" echoed Suydam, doubtfully.

"Yes," the novelist went on, "local color—that's what I want—fresh impressions."

"I don't quite see—" the young man began, hesitatingly.

"Oh, I can explain what I want," Rupert de Ruyter interrupted. "You see, I'm a New-Yorker born, as you are, and I've lived here all my life, and I know the city pretty well—that is, I know certain aspects of it thoroughly. I can do the Patriarchs, or a Claremont tea, or any other function of the smart set; I know the way men talk in clubs; I've studied the painters and the literary men and the journalists; I can describe a first night at the theatre or a panic in the Street; but I've pretty nearly exhausted the people I know, and I thought I would come down here and get introduced to a set I didn't know."

"I shall be glad to take you to the Settlement," Suydam responded, "and—"

"It isn't the Settlement I want, thank you," De Ruyter interrupted. "The people in the Settlement are variants of types I know already. The people I want to meet are people I don't know anything about—the very poor people, the tenement-house people, the people who work for the sweaters. Do you know any of those?"

"Yes," Suydam answered, "I know many of them. But they are not half so picturesque and so pathetic as the sensational newspapers make

them out. Wouldn't you rather go and see the Chinese quarter?"

"That isn't what I want," the novelist made answer. "The Chinese quarter is barbarous; it is exotic; it is extraneous; it is a mere accidental excrescence on New York. But the tenement-house people have come to stay; they are an integral and a vital part of the city. I don't care about Chinatown, and I do care about Mulberry Bend. Now, Suydam, you know Mulberry Bend, don't you?"

"Yes," Suydam returned. "I know Mulberry Bend."

"Do you know any tenement-house in the Bend, or near it, which is characteristic—which is typical of the worst that the Bend has to show?" De Ruyter asked.

"Yes," Suydam responded again. "I think I could find a tenement of that kind."

"Then take me there now, if you can spare me an hour or two," said the novelist.

"I can put off my errand till this afternoon," the young man answered. "I think I can show you what you want. Come with me."

They had been standing where they had met, at the corner of the Bowery and Rivington Street. Now, under John Suydam's guidance, they walked a little way up the Bowery, beneath the single track of the elevated railroad. Then they turned into a side street, and pushed their way westward.

IN MULBERRY BEND

Whenever they came to a crossing De Ruyter remarked that three of the corners always, and four of them sometimes, were saloons. The broad gilt signs over the open doors of these bar-rooms bore names either German or Irish, until they came to a corner where one of the saloons called itself the Caffè Cristoforo Colombo. A wooden stand, down the side street, and taking up a third of the width of the walk, had a sign announcing ice-cold soda-water at two cents a glass with fruit syrups; with chocolate and cream, the price was three cents. Right on the corner of the curb stood a large wash-tub half filled with water, in which soaked doubtful young cabbages and sprouts; its guardian was a thin slip of a girl with a red handkerchief knotted over her head.

At this corner Suydam turned out of the side street, and went down a street no wider perhaps, but extending north and south in a devious and hesitating way not common in the streets of New York. The sidewalks of this sinuous street were inconveniently narrow for its crowded population, and they were made still narrower by tolerated encroachments of one kind or another. Here, for instance, from the side of a small shop projected a stand on which unshelled pease wilted under the strong rays of the young June sun. There, for example, were steps down to the low basement, and in a corner of the hollow at the foot of these stairs there might be a pail with dingy ice packed about a can of alleged ice-

cream, or else a board bore half a dozen tough brown loaves, also proffered for sale to the chance customer. Here and there, again, the dwellers in the tall tenements had brought chairs to the common door, and were seated, comfortably conversing with their neighbors, regardless of the fact that they thus blocked the sidewalk, and compelled the passer-by to go out into the street itself.

And the street was as densely packed as the sidewalk. In front of Suydam and De Ruyter as they picked their way along was a swarthy young fellow with his flannel shirt open at the throat and rolled up on his tawny arms; he was pushing before him a hand-cart heaped with gayly colored calicoes. Other hand-carts there were, from which other men, young and old, were vending other wares—fruit more often than not; fruit of a most untempting frowziness. Now and then a huge wagon came lumbering through the street, heaped high with lofty cases of furniture from a rumbling and clattering factory near the corner. And before the heavy horses of this wagon the children scattered, waiting till the last moment of possible escape. There were countless children, and they were forever swarming out of the houses and up from the cellars and over the sidewalks and up and down the street. They were of all ages, from the babe in the arms of its dumpy, thick-set mother to the sweet-faced and dark-eyed girl of ten or twelve really, though she might

MULBERRY STREET FRUIT-VENDERS

seem a precocious fourteen. They ran wild in the street; they played about the knees of their mothers, who sat gossiping in the doorways; they hung over the railing of the fire-escapes, which gridironed the front of every tall house.

Everywhere had the Italians treated the balcony of the fire-escape as an out-door room added to their scant accommodation. They adorned it with flowers growing in broken wooden boxes; they used its railings to dry their parti-colored flannel shirts; they sat out on it as though it were the loggia of a villa in their native land.

Everywhere, also, were noises and smells. The roar of the metropolis was here sharpened by the rattle of near machinery heard through open windows, and by the incessant clatter and shrill cries of the multitude in the street. The rancid odor of ill-kept kitchens mingled with the mitigated effluvium of decaying fruits and vegetables.

But over and beyond the noises and the smells and the bustling business of the throng, Rupert de Ruyter felt as though he were receiving an impression of life itself. It was as if he had caught a glimpse of the mighty movement of existence, incessant and inevitable. What he saw did not strike him as pitiful; it did not weigh him down with despondency. The spectacle before him was not beautiful; it was not even picturesque; but never for a moment, even, did it strike him as pathetic. Interesting it was, of a certainty—unfailingly interesting.

"I haven't found anything so Italian as this for years," he said to his guide, as they picked their way through a tangle of babies sprawling out of a doorway. "I remember seeing nothing more Italian in my first walk in Italy—up the hill-side at Menaggio, after we landed from the boat to Como. Some of the faces here are of a purer Greek type than any you meet in northern Italy. Did you see that young mother we passed just now?"

"The one nursing the infant?" Suydam returned.

"Yes," De Ruyter went on. "She had the oval face and the olive complexion the Greeks left behind them in Sicily. She was not pretty, if you like, but she had the calm beauty of a race of sculptors. Her profile might have come off a Syracusan coin. And to see such a face here, in the city that was New Amsterdam and is New York!"

"We haven't time down here to think of Syracuse and New Amsterdam," said Suydam; "we are too busy thinking about New York. And if we ever do think of Sicily it is only to remember that the Sicilians we have here are the hottest tempered of all the Italians, the most revengeful and vindictive."

"If I didn't know," the novelist remarked, "that the Italians had developed their mercantile faculty at the expense of all their artistic impulses, I should wonder how it was that scions of the

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ITALIAN MOTHER AND CHILD

race of Michael Angelo and Leonardo da Vinci and Raffael of Urbino could now be willing to live in a house as hideous as that!" and with a sweep of his hand he indicated a lofty double tenement, made uglier by much misplaced ornament. "It isn't even picturesque by decay. In fact, this whole region is in better repair than I had expected."

"Look at the house behind you," answered his companion.

The house behind them was one of the oldest tenements in the street. The balconies of its fire-escape were as cluttered as those of the neighboring dwellings; and every window gave signs that the room behind was inhabited. Yet the building, as a whole, seemed neglected.

"This house does seem out at elbows and dishevelled," De Ruyter admitted. "It looks like a tramp, doesn't it?"

"It does not look very clean," said Suydam. "And the back building is dirtier yet. That's where we are going, if you like."

"Well," De Ruyter answered, "if there is local color to be found anywhere round here, I guess we shall find a fair share of it in this place."

"This way, then," Suydam said, plunging into a covered alleyway, which extended under the house, and led into a small yard paved with uneven flag-stones, and shut in on all four sides by the surrounding buildings. Even on that sunny pure morning there was a dank chill in the air,

and there were patches of moisture here and there on the pavement.

"The new building laws don't allow back buildings of this sort," Suydam explained. "But there are thousands of them in the city, put up before the new laws went into effect. Perhaps we had better try the basement first."

In one corner of the yard half a dozen steps led down into the basement of the back building. Followed by the novelist, the young man from the University Settlement went down these steps and into the cellarlike room, which occupied about half the space under the back building.

The air in this room was so foul that De Ruyter held his breath for a moment. The room was not more than twelve feet square; its walls were unplastered, showing the coarse foundation-stones; its floor was of earth, trodden to hardness, except where the drippings from the beer-cans had moistened it; the beams of the floor above seemed rotten. In the damp heat of this room ten or a dozen men and boys were seated on old chairs and on broken boxes, smoking, playing cards by the light of a single foul and flaring kerosene-lamp, and drinking the dregs of beer-kegs collected in old cans.

The inhabitants of the cellar looked up as Suydam and De Ruyter entered, and then they resumed their previous occupations, with no further attention to the intruders.

The man nearest to the door was a powerfully

built fellow of fifty, with gray hair cropped close to his head. He was playing cards. He had a knife thrust in his leathern belt.

"Good-morning, Giacomo," said Suydam to this grizzled brute. "I haven't heard of you for a long while now. When did you get off the Island?"

"Las' week," was the gruff answer.

"And where is your wife now?" the young man asked.

"She work," answered Giacomo.

Suydam did not pursue the conversation further. Judging that the novelist had seen enough, he turned and went up the rickety steps again, followed by his friend.

"Ouf!" said De Ruyter, drawing a long breath, as they stood again in the cramped yard. "I don't see how they can breathe that air and live."

"They don't live," answered Suydam — "at least, the weaker are soon pushed to the wall and die, leaving only the tougher specimens you saw. Now we will go up-stairs, if you like."

"I'm ready," De Ruyter responded. "This is exactly what I came to see."

In the centre of the back building there was an entry. The door was off its hinges. Just inside the passage were the stairs, with the railing broken, and many of the steps dangerously decayed. There was little light as they went up, and a rank odor of decaying fish accompanied them.

At the head of the stairs there was a door on either hand. Suydam knocked at them in turn, and then tried to open them; but they were locked, and there was no response to the repeated hammerings.

"I say," remarked the novelist, as they went up to the floor above, "do these people like to have us intrude on them in this way?"

"Some don't," Suydam answered, promptly, "and of course I try never to intrude. But most of them don't mind. Most of them have no sense of home. Most of them don't know what privacy means. How could they?"

"True," echoed the novelist. "How could they?"

"Here is an exemplification of what I mean," said the young man from the Settlement as they came to the next landing.

The door leading into the room on the right was open. The room was perhaps ten feet square; it contained two beds. On one of the beds a man sat cross-legged sewing; he glanced up for a moment only as the two visitors darkened the doorway, and then he went on with his work. On the other bed were two little children, half naked and asleep; one was a boy of three, the other a girl of nearly two. On the edge of this bed sat a tall boy of seventeen, also sewing. In the narrow alley between the two beds were two sewing-machines, one tended by a girl of fifteen or sixteen perhaps, a thin, stunted child, with

bent shoulders. The other machine was operated by the mother of these children, a large-framed woman of forty, with the noble head so often seen among the Trasteverines.

She knew Suydam, and she smiled.

"Good-mornin'," she said.

"Good-morning," responded Suydam. "I am showing a friend over the building. You seem a little crowded here."

"Not crowd' now," she answered. "Only one boarder now," and she indicated the man seated cross-legged on the bed. "Last week two."

"Where is your husband?" asked the young man.

"Oh, he got another girl," she replied, with a vague gesture, apparently of disapproval.

Suydam and De Ruyter went a floor higher, glancing into the rooms which were open. Suydam knew most of the inhabitants, and they seemed glad to see him. Evidently they looked on him as a friend.

On the top floor, under the steps which led to the roof, was a den scarce six feet by eight. Small as it was, this room had better furniture than most of those De Ruyter had seen; it contained evidences of a desire to make a home. There were violent chromos pinned to the wall. The bed had a parti-colored coverlet. The sole inhabitant was a tall, dark Italian with fiery eyes. He was cooking macaroni with ropy cheese over an oil-lamp. His door was ajar only.

"Good-morning, Pietro," said Suydam, cheerfully.

Pietro obeyed his first impulse, and shut the door swiftly. Then he changed his mind, for he opened the door and peered out suspiciously. Recognizing Suydam, he was about to throw it wide, when he caught sight of De Ruyter. There was a moment of hesitancy, and then he took his hand from the knob of the door and went on with his cooking.

"I am showing my friend over the building," explained Suydam.

The Italian said nothing. Apparently his cooking absorbed all his attention. But he gave De Ruyter a searching glance.

Suydam turned to the novelist. "This is Pietro Barretti," he said; "he is one of the most expert layers of mosaic in America. He is from Naples; that's the reason he cooks macaroni so well, I suppose."

"Certainly I haven't seen macaroni cooked that way since I was in Naples last," the novelist remarked, for the sake of talk, not knowing just what to make of the Italian's manner.

"Your wife not here?" asked Suydam.

"No," the Italian answered, abruptly.

"Where is she?" persisted the young man.

"She mort," responded Barretti.

"Dead?" Suydam cried. "That is very sad. When did she die?" .

"Ten days," the Italian replied.

When Suydam and De Ruyter had made an end of their visit, and were going down the stairs cautiously, the young man from the University Settlement asked the novelist if he had seen anything interesting.

"Oh yes," was the answer. "I've got lots of color; just what I wanted. And that Italian whose wife was mort—he's copy, I'm sure."

"Copy?" queried Suydam.

"I mean I can use him in one of my sketches for the *Metropolis*," the novelist explained. "I wish I knew what his wife was like."

"She was a pretty girl—dark-haired, dark-eyed, with a lively smile," Suydam said. "He was very jealous of her. I've been told they used to quarrel bitterly."

"I shouldn't like to have that fellow for an enemy," De Ruyter declared, as they passed through the alleyway and came out in the open air. "He has an eye like a glass stiletto."

The novelist and the young man from the University Settlement walked up the street together. As they drew near to a police-station, jealously guarded by its green lamps, three officers came out and turned down the street.

When the policemen were abreast of the two friends, one of them stepped aside and accosted the young man from the Settlement.

"Mr. Suydam," he said, "you gentlemen from the Settlement sometimes know what's going on

better than we do. Have you seen Pietro Barretti lately—the one they call Italian Pete?"

"I saw him not ten minutes ago—in his own room," Suydam answered.

"He's all right, boys," cried the policeman. "He's there."

"Do you want him?" asked Suydam.

"Don't we?" the policeman replied, promptly. "We've got to bring him in."

"What has he done?" De Ruyter inquired.

"Oh, he's done enough!" responded the officer. "He murdered his wife last week, that's what he's done."

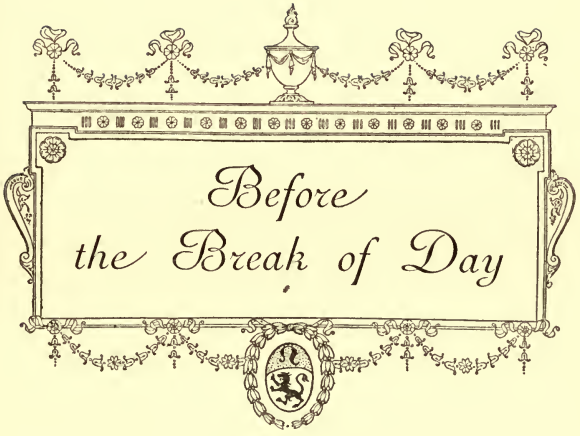
Suydam looked at De Ruyter.

"Yes," said De Ruyter, "that completes the picture. I can get a good *mot de la fin* now."

(1893.)

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

"'I SAW HIM NOT TEN MINUTES AGO'"


Before
the Break of Day

SHE lived in a little wooden house on the corner of the street huddled in the shadow of two towering tenements. There are a few frail buildings of this sort still left in that part of the city, half a mile east of the Bowery and half a mile south of Tompkins Square, where the architecture is as irregular, as crowded, and as little cared for as the population. Amid the old private houses erected for a single family, and now violently altered to accommodate eight or ten—amid the tall new tenements, stark and ugly — here and there one can still find wooden houses built before the city expanded, half a century old now, worn and shabby and needlessly ashamed in the presence of every new edifice no better than they. With the peak of their shingled roofs they are pathetic survivals of a time when New York still remembered that it had been New Amsterdam, and when it did not build its dwellings in imitation of the polyglot loftiness of the Tower of Babel. It was in one of these little houses with white clapboarded walls, ashen gray in the paling moonlight, that Maggie O'Donnell lay fast asleep, when the bell in a far-off steeple tolled three in the morning of the day that was to be the Fourth of July.

She was asleep in the larger of the two little rooms over the saloon. In that part of the city there are saloons on every corner almost, and sometimes two and three in a block. The signs over the doors of most of these saloons and over the doors of the groceries and of the bakeries and of the other shops bear strangely foreign names. The German quarter of the city is not far off, nor is the Italian, nor the Chinese; but hereabouts the houses are packed with Poles chiefly, and chiefly Jews—industrious, docile, and saving. Not until midnight had the whir of the sewing-machines ceased in the tenements which occupied the three other corners. The sign over the door of the saloon above which Maggie lay fast asleep bore an Irish name, the name of her husband, Terence O'Donnell. But the modest boards which displayed his name were overawed by the huge signs that flanked them, filling a goodly share of the wall on either street and proclaiming the "McGown's Pass Brewery, Kelly & Company."

These brewer's signs were so large that they made the little house seem even smaller than it was — and it was not more than twenty feet square. The doors of the saloon were right at the corner, of course, to catch trade. On one street there were two windows, and on the other one window and a door over which was the sign "Family Entrance." This door opened into a little passage, from which access could be had to the saloon, and from which also arose the narrow stairs

leading to the home of Terence O'Donnell and Maggie, his wife, on the floor above. The saloon filled the whole ground-floor except the space taken up by this entry and the stairs. A single jet of gas had burned dimly over the bar ever since Terry had locked up a little after midnight. The bar curved across the saloon, and behind it the sideboard with its bevelled-edge mirrors lined the two inner walls. The sideboard glittered with glasses built up in tiers, and a lemon lay yellow at the top of every pyramid. The beer-pumps were in the centre under the bar; at one end was the small iron safe where Terence kept his money; and at the other end, against the wall, just behind the door which opened into the Family Entrance, was a telephone.

Up-stairs there were two little rooms and a closet or two. The smaller of the rooms Maggie had turned into a kitchen and dining-room. The larger — the one on the corner — was their bedroom, and here Maggie lay asleep. The night was close and warm, and though the windows were open, the little white curtains hung limp and motionless. The day before had been hot and cloudless, so the brick buildings on the three other corners had stored up heat for fifteen hours, and had been giving it out ever since the sun had set. Stifling as it was, Maggie O'Donnell slept heavily. It was after midnight when Terry had kissed her at the door, and she had been asleep for three hours. Already there were faint hints of the com-

ing day, for here in New York the sun rises early on the Fourth of July—at half-past four. A breeze began to blow lazily up from the East River and fluttered the curtains feebly. Maggie tossed uneasily, reached out her hand, and said "Terry."

Suddenly she was wide awake. For a moment she looked stupidly at the empty place beside her, and then she remembered that Terry would be gone all night, working hard on the boat and the barges making ready for the picnic. She turned again, but sleep had left her. She lay quietly in bed listening; she could catch nothing but the heavy rumble of a brewery wagon in the next street and the hesitating toot of a Sound steamer. Then she heard afar off three or four shots of a revolver, and she knew that some young fellow was up early, and had already begun to celebrate the Fourth on the roof of the tenement where he lived.

She tried to go to sleep, but the effort was hopeless. She was awakened fully, and she knew that there was small chance of her dropping off into slumber again. More than once she had wakened like this in the middle of the night, an hour or so before daybreak, and then she had to lie there in bed quietly listening to Terry's regular breathing. She lay there now alone, thinking of Terry, grateful for his goodness to her, and happy in his love. She lay there alone, wondering where she would be now if Terry had not taken pity on her.

Then all at once she raised herself in bed, and held her breath and listened. For a second she thought she heard a noise in the saloon below her. She was not nervous in the least, but she wished Terry had not left so much money in the safe; and this was the first night he had been away from her since they had been married—nearly two years ago. She strained her ears, but the sound was not repeated. She sank back on the pillow again, making sure that it was a rat dropping down from the bar, where he had been picking up the crumbs of cheese. There were many rats in the cellar, and sometimes they ventured up even to the bedroom and the kitchen next door.

Time was when it would have taken a loud noise to wake the girl who was now Terence O'Donnell's wife out of a sound sleep. After her mother died, when Maggie was not five years old, her father had moved into one of the worst tenements in the city, a ram-shackle old barrack just at the edge of Hell's Kitchen; and there was never any quiet there, day or night, in the house or in the street. There was always a row of some sort going on, whatever the hour of the day; if profanity and riot could keep a girl awake she would never have had any sleep there. But Maggie did not recall that she had been a wakeful child; indeed, she remembered that she could sleep at any time and anywhere. On the hot summer nights, when her father came home in-

toxicated, she would steal away and climb up to the roof and lie down there, slumbering as healthily as though she were in their only room.

Even then her father used to get drunk often, on Saturday night always, and frequently once or twice in the middle of the week. And when he had taken too much he was mad always. If he found her at home he beat her. She could recall distinctly the first time her father had knocked her down, but the oaths that had accompanied the blow she had forgotten. He had not knocked her down often, but he had sworn at her every day of her life. The vocabulary of profanity was the first that her infant ears had learned to distinguish.

Her father quit drinking for a month after he married again. They moved away from Hell's Kitchen to a better house near the East River. All went well for a little while, and her step-mother was good to her. But her father went back to his old ways again, and soon his new wife turned out to be no better. When the fit was on they quarrelled with each other, and they took turns in beating Maggie, if she were not quick to make her escape. It was when aiming a blow at Maggie one Saturday night that her father pitched forward and fell down a flight of the tenement-house stairs, and was picked up dead. The neighbors carried him up to the room where his wife lay in a liquorish stupor.

Maggie was nearly fourteen then. She went

on living with her step-mother, who got her a place in a box-factory. The first days of work were the happiest of Maggie's girlhood. She remembered the joy which she felt at her ability to earn money; it gave her a sense of being her own mistress, of being able to hold her own in the world. And she made friends among the other girls. One of them, Sadie McDermott, had a brother Jim, who used to come around on Saturday night and tease his sister for money. Jim belonged to a gang, and he never worked if he could help it. He had no trade. Maggie remembered the Saturday night when she and Sadie had walked home together, and when Jim got mad because his sister would not divide her wages with him. He snatched her pocket-book and started to run. When Maggie reproved him with an oath and caught him by one arm, he threw her off so roughly that she fell and struck her head on a lamp-post so hard that she fainted.

As Maggie lay in her bed that Fourth of July morning, while her past life unrolled itself before her like a panorama, she knew that the scar on the side of her head was not the worst wound Jim McDermott had dealt her. As she looked back, she wondered how she had ever been friendly with him; how she had let him follow her about; how she had allowed him to make love to her. It was on Jim McDermott's account that she had had the quarrel with her step-mother. Having robbed a drunken man of five dollars, Jim had in-

vited Maggie to a picnic; and the step-mother, a little drunker than usual that evening, had said that if Maggie went with him she would not be received again. Maggie was not one to take a dare, and she told Jim she would go with him in the morning. The step-mother cursed her for an ungrateful girl; and when Maggie returned with him from the picnic late the next night, and came to the door of the room where she and her step-mother lived, they found it locked against her, and all Maggie's possessions tied in a bundle, and scornfully left outside on the landing.

It had not taken Jim long that night to persuade Maggie to go away with him; and she had not seen her step-mother since. A week later, but not before he and Maggie had quarrelled, Jim was arrested for robbing the drunken man; he was sent up to the Island. Since the picnic Maggie had not been back to the factory. Jim had taken her with him one night to a dance-hall, and there she went without him when she was left alone in the world. There she had met Terry a month later. When she first saw Terry the thing plainest before her was the Morgue; she was on the way there, and she was going fast, and she knew it. Although winter had not yet come, she had already a cough that racked her day and night.

And as she lay there in her comfortable bed, and thought of the chill of the Morgue from which Terry had saved her, she closed her eyes to keep out the dreadful picture, and she clinched her

HE BELONGED TO A "GANG"

fists across her forehead. Then she smiled as she remembered the way Terry had thrashed Jim, who had got off the Island somehow before his time was up. Jim said he had a pull with the police, and he came to her for money, and he threatened to have her taken up. It was then Terry had the scrap with him, and did him up. Terry had had a day off, for his boss kept closed on Sundays; at that time Terry was keeping bar at a high-toned café near Gramercy Park.

When he thrashed Jim that was not the first time Terry had been good to her. Nor was it the last. A fortnight later he took her away from the dance-hall, and as soon as he could get a day off he married her. They went down to the Tombs, and the judge married them. The judge knew Terry, and when he had kissed the bride he congratulated Terry, and said that the new-made husband was a lucky man, and that he had got a good wife.

A good wife Maggie knew she had been, and she was sure she brought Terry luck. When the man who had been running the house which now bore the name of Terence O'Donnell over its door got into trouble and had to skip the country, the boss had put Terry in charge, and had let Maggie go to house-keeping in the little rooms over the saloon; and when the boss died suddenly, his widow knew Terry was honest, and sold out the place to him, cheap, on the instalment plan. That was a year and a half ago, and all the instal-

ments had been paid except the last, which was not due for a week yet, though the money for it lay all ready in the safe down-stairs. And Terry was doing well; he was popular; his friends would come two blocks out of the way to get a drink at his place; and he had just had a chance to go into a picnic speculation. He was sure to make money; and perhaps in two or three years they might be able to pay off the mortgage on the fixtures. Then they would be rich; and perhaps Terry would get into politics.

Suddenly the current of Maggie's thoughts was arrested. From the floor below there came sounds, confused and muffled, and yet unmistakable. Maggie listened, motionless, and then she got out of bed quickly. She knew that there was some one in the saloon down-stairs; and at that hour no one could be there for a good purpose. Whoever was there was a thief. Perhaps it was some one of the toughs of the neighborhood, who knew that Terry was away.

She had no weapon of any kind, but she was not in the least afraid. She stepped cautiously to the head of the stairs, and crept stealthily down, not delaying to put on her stockings. The sounds in the saloon continued; they were few and slight, but Maggie could interpret them plainly enough; they told her that a man having got into the house somehow, had now gone behind the bar. Probably he was trying to steal the change in the cash-drawer; she was glad that Terry had

CALIFORNIA

"A LITTLE DRUNKER THAN USUAL"

locked all his money in the safe just before he went off.

When Maggie had slipped down the stairs gently, and stood in the little passageway with the door into the saloon ajar before her, she felt a slight draught, and she knew that the thief had entered through a window, and had left it open. Yet there was no use in her calling for assistance. The only people within reach of her voice were the poor Poles, who were too poor-spirited to protest even if they saw her robbed in broad daylight; they were cowardly creatures all of them; and she could not hope for help from them as she would if they were only white men. The policeman might be within reach of her cry; but he had a long beat, and there was only a slim chance that he was near.

Her head was clear, and she thought swiftly. The thing to do, the only thing, was to make use of the telephone to summon assistance. The instrument was within two feet of her as she stood in the passage, but it was on the other side of the door at the end of the bar, and therefore in full view of any one who might be in the saloon. And it would not be possible to ring up the central office and call for help without being heard by the robber.

Having made up her mind what it was best for her to do, Maggie did not hesitate a moment; she pushed the door gently before her and stepped silently into the saloon. As the faint light from

the single dim jet of gas burning over the bar fell upon her, she looked almost pretty, with the aureole of her reddish hair, and with her firm young figure draped in the coarse white gown. She glanced around her, and for a second she saw no one. The window before her was open, but the man who had broken in was not in sight.

As she peered about she heard a scratching, grating noise, and then she saw the top of a man's head just appearing above the edge of the bar behind which his body was concealed. She knew then that the thief was trying to get into the safe where Terry's money was locked up.

Leaving the door wide open behind her, Maggie took the two steps that brought her to the telephone, and rapidly turned the handle. Then she faced about swiftly to see what the man would do.

The first thing he did was to bob his head suddenly under the bar, disappearing wholly. Then he slowly raised his face above the edge of the bar, and Maggie found herself staring into the shifty eyes of Jim McDermott.

"Hello, Maggie!" he said, as he stood up. "Is that you?"

She saw that he had a revolver in his right hand. But she put up her hand again and repeated the telephone call.

"Drop that!" he cried, as he raised the revolver. "You try to squeal and I'll shoot—see?"

"'DROP THAT!' HE CRIED"

"Where did you steal that pistol, Jim McDermott?" was all she answered.

"None o' your business where I got it," he retorted. "I got it good and ready for you now. I kin use it too, and don't you forget it! You quit that telephone or you'll see how quick I can shoot. You hear me?"

She did not reply. She was waiting for the central office to acknowledge her call. She looked Jim McDermott square in the eyes, and it was he who was uncomfortable and not she.

Then the bell of the telephone rang, and she turned and spoke into the instrument clearly and rapidly and yet without flurry. "This is 31 Chatham. There's a burglar here. It's Jim McDermott. Send the police quick."

This was her message; and then she faced about sharply and cried to him, "Now shoot, and be damned!"

He took her at her word, and fired. The bullet bored a hole in the wooden box of the telephone.

Maggie laughed tauntingly, and slipped swiftly out of the door, but not swiftly enough to avoid the second bullet.

Five minutes later when the police arrived, just as the day was beginning to break, they found Jim McDermott fled, the window open, the safe uninjured, and Maggie O'Donnell lying in the passageway at the foot of the stairs, her night-gown stained with blood from a flesh wound in her arm.

A Midsummer
Midnight

AFTER three years' service at sea on the flag-ship of the White Squadron, Lieutenant John Stone had a long leave of absence. It was late in the afternoon of one of the hottest days of August when he left the navy-yard and took the ferry to New York. The street-car in which he rode across town crawled along, the horses seeming to be exhausted by the wearing weather of the preceding fortnight, and the driver had no energy to keep them up to their work.

It mattered little to John Stone how slowly they went; he was in no hurry; he had nothing to do; he had nobody waiting for him. At forty he was alone in the world, without a blood-relation anywhere or any nearer than a second cousin, without a home, without an address, except "Care of the Navy Department, Washington, D.C." He was almost without ambition even in the service now, for he had not yet had a command, and he would not get his step for three or four years more. He was fond of his profession, and of late he had been working lovingly at its early history. He had come to New York now to look up in the libraries a few missing links in an account of the

rise and fall of Carthage as a sea power. To be near the books he had to consult, he was going to stay at a hotel within two or three blocks of Washington Square.

When he had registered at the hotel, the clerk, reading his name upsidedown, said, courteously: "I'm sorry we can't do better for you, Mr. Stone, but I shall have to put you on the sixth floor. You see, we are overrun with our Southern and Western trade now; they have found out that New York is the finest summer resort in the country. The best I can do for you is to give you a room on the Avenue, with a bath-room attached."

"That will do very well," Stone answered.

"Front!" called the clerk. "Show Mr. Stone up to 313."

When the naval officer reached room 313 it was nearly six o'clock. He threw open the window and looked down at the street below. Even at that height the heat welled up from the stone sidewalks and from the brick walls opposite. To his ear it seemed almost as though the mighty roar of the metropolis rose to him muffled and made more remote by the heat. He lighted a cigar and leaned out of the window, and wondered how many people there were in all the city whom he knew by sight, and how very few there were who could call him by name.

A sweltering wind from the west swayed the thick and dusty branches of the trees which lined

"'I SIZED YOU UP WHEN YOU COME IN'"

the curb far down below him. He threw his cigar away half smoked. Then he took a cold bath, and went down to the dining-room somewhat refreshed.

At the table to which the head waiter waved him there was already one man sitting, a tall, handsome young fellow of twenty-five, perhaps. Stone liked the man's face, and he liked the way the flannel shirt was cut so as to leave the full throat free. The manner in which the simple scarf was knotted and its ends tucked into the shirt he noticed also; and he saw that the young fellow had insisted on bringing his black slouch hat with him into the dining-room, having hung it on the back of the next chair. When this seat was given to Stone, the hat was promptly transferred to the chair on the other side of the owner. Stone made up his mind that his neighbor was a ranchman of some sort, who had come East on business.

It does not take long for two lonely men to get acquainted; and before he had eaten his green corn, Stone knew all about his neighbor at table, and the neighbor knew something about him.

"I sized you up when you come in," the young fellow said, "an' I took stock in you from the start. Somehow I kind o' thought you was one of Uncle Sam's boys, though o' course I didn't 'low you was a sailor. I never see a sailor till this mornin', when I went down on the dock to

get news of this *Touraine* steamer, an' the sailor down there was a Frenchman, an' not like you, not by a jugful. I suppose, now, Uncle Sam's sailors are like his other boys I've seen at home often. There's Dutchmen that ain't bad men, an' I've seen Dagoes you could tie to, and sometimes a greaser, now and then — not but what they's powerful skase, greasers you can trust—but Uncle Sam's boys are white men every time."

The young fellow was Clay Magruder. He was a cowboy, as Stone had supposed, and he was in New York on a mission of the highest importance to himself. He was waiting for the girl he wanted to marry, and she was expected to arrive the next morning on the French steamer.

"The grub here ain't so bad, is it?" Magruder said, as the repast drew to an end. "O' course it ain't like what we get at home. I don't find nowhere no beef that's equal to the beef we've been gettin' right along now for two years, ever since I've been with Old Man Pettigrew. The Hash-knife Outfit always has the best cookin' on the trail. It's jest notorious for it. Things here in New York is good enough, but the flavor don't take hold of you like it does at home ; an' their coffee East is poor stuff, ain't it? It don't bite you like coffee should."

After dinner they went into the smoking-room of the hotel, and Stone offered a cigar to his new friend.

"No, thank you," he responded, taking a small

brier-wood pipe out of his trousers-pocket. "I don't go much on cigars; I can git more solid comfort out of a pipe, I reckon." After he had filled his pipe and pulled at it half a dozen times, he said to Stone, suddenly: "Say! is there any show in town to-night? I've got a night off, you know, and I've allus heerd that for shows New York could lay over everything in sight. You've been to this town before, haven't you?"

Stone admitted that this was not his first visit to New York.

"I reckoned so," was Clay Magruder's comment. "An' so you know your way here, an' I don't; there's too many trails crossin' for me to keep to the road. Suppose we go to the show together—ef there is a show in town?"

Stone bought an evening paper, and looked over the list of amusements. He wondered what would best suit the tastes of his new friend.

"There's Deadwood Dick's Wild Western Exhibition at Niblo's—" he began.

"Deadwood Dick?" interrupted the cowboy, in great contempt; "he's a holy show, he is. He's a fraud; that's what he is. An' is he the only thing we can take in to-night?"

"Oh no," the sailor replied. "There are half a dozen other things to see. There's a comic opera at the Garden Theatre, with a variety show up in the roof garden afterwards."

"A comic opera—singing, and funny business, and pretty girls, I suppose?" said the Westerner.

"I reckon we'd might as well go there—unless you'd rather go somewhere else."

"The comic opera and the roof garden will just suit me," Stone responded.

They were fortunate in getting good seats at the theatre, where they arrived as the curtain was rising on the first act of "Patience." Even in midsummer the attire of Stone's new friend attracted some attention, and a group of pretty girls in the row behind them nudged each other as he came in and giggled. In their hearts they were glad to look at so handsome a man.

During the first act Magruder's face was a study for Stone. It was evident that the cowboy failed wholly to understand the narrow and insular satire of "Patience." When the curtain fell at last, he could contain himself no longer.

"I never see such a fool play," he said. "There ain't no sense in makin' believe that one fellow could round up a bunch of girls that way. It's the plumb-stupidest show I've seen for years and years. It's bad as Deadwood Dick 'most. 'Patience' they call it? Well, I 'ain't got none to see no more of it. What's this roof garden you told me about?"

So Stone took him up to the roof garden, and they were glad to get again into the open air, baked as the atmosphere was even at the top of the building. They had a drink and a smoke while they listened to the music.

When the variety show began on the little

"'I DON'T GO MUCH ON CIGARS'"

stage, Stone went forward in time to secure advantageous positions for Magruder and himself. Early on the programme was a French song by a highly-colored young lady wearing an enormous hat.

"That's a good enough song," the cowboy declared, "but what sort of a lingo is it she's singin' it in? Why isn't plain United States good enough for songs? Not but what she's a pretty girl, too, and lively on her feet."

The part of the performance which excited Clay Magruder's warmest appreciation was the serpentine dance of Mademoiselle Éloise. When he beheld the coiling draperies of that graceful young woman curving about in picturesque and unexpected convolutions, and heightened in effect by the changing colors of the lime-lights directed upon the stage, his enthusiasm rose to a height.

"That's *some!*" he cried. "It reminds me of an Eyetalian gal I saw dance once in Cheyenne. She was a daisy, too; but this is bigger. They's no doubt about it, this is a heap bigger."

Magruder joined in accomplishing the inevitable recall and the repetition of a part of the dance. Perhaps this was the reason why the next two or three numbers of the programme seemed to him to be less interesting. At all events, both the cowboy and the sailor tired of the entertainment. So they made their way through the crowd and down to the street.

As they walked back to the hotel Magruder

told Stone what had brought him to New York. It was to meet the *Touraine* on her expected arrival in the morning, and to persuade one of the passengers to marry him.

"She's jest got to marry me," he said, earnestly. "I can't get along without her any longer. She's a sort of governess to Old Man Pettigrew's sister's kids — learns them to read and play the pianner. They was all in Miles City last winter, and that was when I first see her. I made up my mind right off on the spot that there was Mrs. Clay Magruder if I could get her. And I'm here now to get her if I can. She's as pretty as a picture—better'n that, too, for I never see no chromo half as good-lookin' as her. Once last winter they was 'most a blizzard; leastways the wind set back on its hind-legs and howled. You ought to have seen her then, with the color in her cheeks! An' everything was froze stiff, and she was skeered of fallin'. Why, she teetered along jest like a chicken with a jag." And he laughed out loud at the recollection. "She'll be here in the mornin', and you shall see her. I'm goin' to be down on that dock good an' early to-morrow, and no French sailor ain't goin' to stand me off."

As they drew near to the hotel, Magruder remarked: "Say! ain't they a jag-factory somewheres round here? Come in and have one with me."

Stone went with him, and they drank the young lady's health, Magruder expatiating on her charms

"'THAT'S BULLY,' HE CRIED"

and on the happiness that awaited him when he should marry her. Then they crossed the street to the hotel and went up to their rooms.

As it happened, the room of Clay Magruder was exactly opposite John Stone's, so it was at their own doors that they parted for the night with a hearty grasp of the hand.

The sailor found the air of his room stifling. He threw wide the window and stood for a while looking out over the heated city as it lay around him in the darkness. He wondered what the girl was like whom Magruder had come East to meet, and he caught himself almost envying the cowboy. Then he sighed unconsciously and made ready for bed. As he wound up his watch he saw that it was nearly half-past eleven. Five minutes afterwards he was asleep.

He had been asleep but five minutes, as it seemed to him, when he was waked slowly with a slight difficulty in breathing, and with the feeling that all was not well. While he was still drowsy, he was conscious of a crackling sound like the snapping of dry twigs. When he opened his eyes he found that they smarted. The first long breath that he drew filled his lungs with thin smoke. In an instant he was wide awake. The meaning of the crackling and the snapping was not doubtful. The hotel was on fire.

He sprang out of bed and opened the door of his room. The corridor was full of smoke, and the sound of the flames was louder. At the bend

in the hall where the stairs were, sharp tongues of flame were licking around the corner. Stone saw that his retreat that way was cut off, and that he must rely on the windows for escape. He crossed to the door opposite, pounded at it heavily, and cried "Fire! Fire! Get up at once!" till Clay Magruder answered. The floor of the corridor was hot beneath his feet as he went back to his own room, closed the door, and dressed himself as swiftly as he could, the murmur of the fire growing nearer and nearer.

When he was still in his shirt-sleeves he stepped again to the corridor and called across to Magruder.

The door opposite opened, and the cowboy appeared in it, half-dressed.

"The stairs are on fire," cried Stone; "we can't get out that way. We must try the windows. Take your sheets and your blankets and come in here."

"I wish I'd a couple of lariats here," said Magruder, as he went back for the bed-linen.

The air in the hall was now thick and suffocating, and the stairs at the corner were a furnace of fierce flames. Here and there thin threads of smoke were rising from the floor of the corridor.

The cowboy reappeared in his doorway, with his arms full of bedclothes.

"Come in here quick, so that I can get this door shut and keep out the smoke," said the sailor, standing back to leave the doorway open.

As Magruder stepped out of his room, the floor of the corridor gave way with a crash, and a red-hot gulf yawned between the two rooms. Stone leaned far forward to try and save his new friend. But the falling of the floor was too sudden, and Magruder went down into the roaring furnace below, from which the flames sprang up fiercely. In a moment he was lost to sight in the seething fire. Stone stood stock-still for a second, bent over the blazing opening, with his arm outstretched until the heat scorched it. Then he rose to his feet swiftly and shut the door behind him.

His own room was now full of smoke, and he knew that the door would be on fire in less than a minute. He threw open the window and looked down, seeing at once that his bedding alone would be useless, as it would take him down two stories at the most, while the fire had already broken out at the front of the building. He discovered that there was a ledge or narrow cornice running around the house just on the end of his floor. He stepped out upon this, and closed the window behind him. As he did so, the flames burst through from the corridor into his room.

Standing outside of his window on the narrow ledge, which gave him a scant foothold, he saw in front of him on his right what he had not before observed—a tall tower with an illuminated clock face. The hands pointed to four minutes past midnight. From the street below there arose

a confused murmur of noises—shouts and cries of command, the rattle of heavy wheels as the engines rushed up, the regular rhythmic beat of the pumps as they got into play, the hissing of steam as a dozen streams of water curved upward and smote the burning building. The foliage of the trees which lined the curb was so thick that Stone could not see the sidewalk just below him, and apparently those in charge of operations had not seen him.

The sailor had faced death before — he had weathered many a fierce gale at sea; he had been at Samoa during the hurricane; he had been overboard for an hour once in the Bay of Biscay—and he was not afraid to die. He recalled his sensations when he believed himself to be drowning, and he remembered that his dominant thought had been that such a death then and there was needless and served no purpose. On that occasion he was more or less passive, being spent with the struggle against the waves; at present he was strong and ready to make a fight for his life. Then he had to contend with water, and now he knew that water was his chief hope.

At that moment there came a louder roar from far down in the street below: the water-tower had arrived. It was speedily erected and in service, and from its long trunk a thick stream of water was forced into the blazing hotel perhaps fifty feet from where Stone was standing. He watched it at work, and then he raised his eyes

and again caught sight of the illuminated dial, whereon the hands now pointed to seven minutes after midnight.

Stone wondered whether the firemen would be able to get the better of the flames. He doubted it, but he wished that he could take part in the fight. It was rather the helplessness of his position than its fearfulness that he felt most keenly. He was in danger, and the danger was deepening with every minute of delay, but he could do nothing. The ledge on which he was standing was barely a foot wide, and it was perhaps ten feet long. Its length measured the width of his room, which projected a yard or more beyond the main line of the building. Stone moved cautiously to the right till he came to the end of the ledge, in the hope that it continued around the side, and that by following it he might pass along the whole front of the hotel, and perhaps find some way to escape to the roof of the house next door.

But the hope was futile, for the slight cornice shrank away as it turned back till it was barely an inch wide. The sailor was used to an insecure footing at a great height, and his nerves were steady; but he knew that it was certain destruction for him to try to advance in that direction. With his back pressed tight to the wall, he glided along to the window, now lighted up by the flames which filled his room. He pushed past it to the left until he came to the end of the ledge on that side, finding that the projection ceased on the one

hand as it had on the other. He felt himself a prisoner, held fast, with little hope of rescue; neither to the right nor to the left could he move; behind him was the wall of the blazing hotel, and before him was a sheer drop of sixty feet to the street below. He glanced down for an instant, and then raised his head again. To the right, in the distance, was the clock-tower, and it was now nine minutes past twelve. He wondered if the clock had stopped suddenly, for it seemed to him nearly an hour since he had awaked to find himself in peril of his life.

He thought of Magruder, and he wondered why the man who had hopes and joys before him should be cut off, while the man who had little to live for should be given a chance for his life. That the cowboy had perished in the flames he had no doubt; and in a flash his imagination bore him outside of the exigencies of the moment, and he had a vision of the *Touraine* making her way past Sandy Hook, and drawing near to Staten Island and anchoring there, too far from the city for its passengers to see the glare of the conflagration. Yet the fire was one to be seen from afar, for there was a sullen roar, and the roof of a wing of the hotel fell in. A myriad of sparks was blasted upward, and the crowd in the street raised a loud shout of warning. Stone looked down, and he saw a woman at a window of the floor below him; she was shrieking with terror, and at last she gave a wild spring forward. He

beheld her crash through the branches of the trees, and he heard her body strike the sidewalk. There was a yell of horror from the crowd, and then silence. A few seconds later Stone caught the quick clang of an ambulance bell in the side street. He counted the strokes automatically until they died away in the distance. His ear was so strained to catch this sound that he heard the rattle of a train stopping at the station of the elevated railroad only a block away, and he seized even the shrill squeak of the brakes as they grated against the wheels. Then he aroused himself, and wondered why he had noted such trifles. Turning his head, he found the single eye of the clock-tower still beaming at him. He blinked stupidly before he saw that it was now thirteen minutes after twelve.

More engines had arrived in the street below, and another hook-and-ladder truck. Several small ladders had been put up to the lower windows, and women and children had been carried down in safety. Stone watched while the firemen tried to raise one of the taller ladders which might reach to the third or fourth floor. The branches of the trees were so close that the men found it impossible to get this longer ladder into position. A man was sent up into the tree, and he was cutting away the branches, when flames burst out of the nearest window. A torrent of water was at once directed into the window, while a second stream splashed down upon the tree and made a watery

shield for the fireman, who went on lopping off the limbs. He labored swiftly, but the fire was swifter still. At almost the same time the flames burst forth from three or four other of the lower windows.

Stone had been noting every effort of the men below. At first he had not been seen. But after the man had cut away a few of the branches of the tree, two or three of the firemen caught sight of the sailor. They shouted to him, but in the roar of the fire behind him and below him he could not make out their words. A captain gave a sudden command, and two men sprang forward with short scaling-ladders, which they succeeded in hooking to the second-story window immediately below the ledge on which he was standing. Looking down, he could see the heads of these men as they climbed the ladders, their bodies being foreshortened into invisibility. The men could not get above the second story, for the fire was gushing forth as though the window were the mouth of hell. The smoke rose black and dense, enshrouding Stone.

He saw that it was useless to hope that they could now get a ladder up to him; the flames would not give them time. The wall behind him was becoming hotter, and the heat had broken the glass of the window of his room. The fire was creeping along the roof above his head, and every now and again it peered over the edge at him, as though seeing how far it had still to go

"THE WALL BEHIND HIM WAS BECOMING HOTTER"

before it could grasp him. The smoke from below was thickening, and threatened to choke him. Through its haze he could see the cyclops eye of the clock-tower gloating over his inevitable fate. The hands on the illuminated dial had slowly crept forward, and it was now nearly twenty minutes past twelve.

Stone knew that his position was untenable for many seconds longer. At any moment the wall might fall back and bury him in the blazing ruins. To remain was impossible ; and there seemed no way of escape. A crash shook the building, and then another ; and he guessed that two of the floors had fallen in. He slid along again to the end of the narrow ledge and tried to peer around the corner, in the vague hope that there might be some possible means of escape. He found that he could not twist his head far enough to see anything while his back was flat against the wall. To turn was to risk a fall to the pavement below. He looked down fearlessly, and calculated his chances if he missed his footing. Immediately beneath him the tree was taller than its fellows, and its foliage was thicker ; it was barely possible that the branches might break his fall ; but the chance was slim. The smoke poured heavily from the window three feet from him. He hesitated no longer, but turned slowly and steadily. His nerves were unshaken, and he executed the manœuvre in safety. Standing with his face to the wall—which rose sheer above him, and which

gave him no hold for his hands—he was able to thrust out his head sideways and to look around the corner. What he saw gave him a thrill of hope.

His room projected perhaps a yard beyond the main line of the building, forming what might be termed a square bay-window. From his position on the narrow shelf of marble, which ran around the front of the hotel on every floor, he thought he could reach forward and touch the main wall of the building. And here was his one possible chance of escape. In the corner formed by the junction of the projection and the main line there was the leader which conducted the rain-water from the roof. It was of tin only, and in the eyes of the sailor gazing at it with upspringing hope it seemed frail, insecurely fastened, perhaps rotten. But it offered a chance, and the only chance, of life, and therefore it was welcome. Stone prepared to make the best of it.

He gave a final glance around before he made the irrevocable move. He caught sight of the clock, and he saw that it was twenty-two minutes after midnight. He reached forward, and he found that the space was wider than he had thought. It was with the tips of his fingers only that he could touch the tin pipe; it was beyond the reach of his grasp. Yet to seize it was the one way to the street below. He did not hesitate. He stood on his left foot on the very end of the ledge, with his right foot dangling in

space. He made a carefully measured plunge forward, and he griped the leader with his left hand and then instantly with his right. It yielded under the sudden strain, but it did not part. With the habit of a sailor, he clasped his legs about it, and so eased the pressure. Then he began slowly to slide down, gaining velocity as he descended.

At every floor there was a shelf of stone like that on which he had stood outside his window, and through which the tin tube passed. Stone had therefore to release his feet, and by his hands alone to cling to the pipe, which spread from the wall with the weight of his body. Then he clasped his legs again below the ledge and let go one hand after the other. The tin was broken and jagged here and there, and Stone's flesh was cut to the bone. But he did not notice this in the tension of his swift descent.

When he came to the first floor and tried to take a fresh grip with his legs, he found nothing to clasp with his knees. From there to its connection with the gutter the pipe went inside the building. Stone hung from the ledge by his hands, not knowing how far he was above the sidewalk. The smoke was pouring up from the cellar grating beneath him, and in a minute he would have suffocated. So he let go.

The drop was ten feet or more, and he came down on a trunk which had been thrown out of a window. From this he pitched to the sidewalk

with a broken leg and a dislocated shoulder. He was dimly conscious of being lifted gently, and of a brief but painful ride. The sharp clang of the ambulance bell he felt as though it were a physical blow.

When he came to himself again it was morning, and he was in bed in a long room with a row of cots on both sides of it, under the slanting sunbeams.

He lay still, wondering.

The occupant of the next bed was unfolding a newspaper, and Stone heard him say to the nurse, with an Alsacian accent: "Ve're goin' have nodder hot day; I vonder how dhose people yust back from Paris on dhe *Douraine* vill like dot?"

(1892.)

"THE OCCUPANT OF THE NEXT BED."

A
Vista in Central Park

IT was the last Sunday in September, and the blue sky arched above the Park, clear, cloudless, unfathomable. The afternoon sun was hot, and high overhead. Now and then a wandering breeze came without warning and lingered only for a moment, fluttering the broad leaves of the aquatic plants in the fountain below the Terrace. At the Casino, on the hill above the Mall, men and women were eating and drinking, some of them inside the dingy and sprawling building, and some of them out-doors at little tables set in curving lines under the gayly colored awnings, which covered the broad walk bending away from the door of the restaurant. From the band-stand in the thick of the throng below came the brassy staccato of a cornet, rendering "The Last Rose of Summer." Even the Ramble was full of people; and the young couples, seeking sequestered nooks under the russet trees, were often forced to share their benches with strangers. Beneath the reddening maples lonely men lounged on the grass by themselves, or sat solitary and silent in the midst of chattering family groups.

The crowd was cosmopolitan and unhurried.

For the most part it was good-natured and well-to-do. There was not a beggar to be seen ; there was no appealing poverty. Fathers of families there were in abundance, well-fed and well-clad, with their wives and with their sons' wives and with their sons' children. Maids in black dresses and white aprons pushed baby-carriages. Young girls in groups of three and four giggled and gossiped. Young men in couples leaned over the bridge of the Lake, smoking and exchanging opinions. There was a general air of prosperity gladly displaying itself in the sunshine ; the misery and the want and the despair of the great city were left behind and thrust out of mind.

Two or three yards after a portly German with a little boy holding each of his hands while a third son still younger rode ahead astride of his father's solid cane, there came two slim Japanese gentlemen, small and sallow, in their neatly cut coats and trousers. A knot of laughing mulatto-girls followed, arm in arm ; they, too, seemed ill-dressed in the accepted costume of civilization, especially when contrasted with half a dozen Italians who passed slowly, looking about them with curious glances ; the men in worn olive velveteens and with gold rings in their ears, the women with bright colors in their skirts and with embroidery on their neckerchiefs. Where the foot-path touched the carriage-drive there stood a plain but comfortably plump Irishwoman, perhaps thirty years of age ; she had a baby in her arms, and a

"YOUNG COUPLES SEEKING SEQUESTERED NOOKS"

little girl of scant three held fast to her patched calico dress; with her left hand she was proffering a basket containing apples, bananas, and grapes; two other children, both under six, played about her skirts; and two more, a boy and a girl, kept within sight of her—the girl, about ten years old, having a basket of her own filled with thin round brown cakes; and the boy, certainly not yet thirteen, holding out a wooden box packed with rolls of lozenges, put up in red and yellow and green papers. Now and again the mother or one of the children made a sale to a pedestrian on his way to the music. The younger children watched, with noisy glee, the light leaps of a gray squirrel bounding along over the grass behind the path and balancing himself with his horizontal tail.

The broad carriage-drive was as crowded as any of the foot-paths. Bicyclists in white sweaters and black stockings toiled along in groups of three and four, bent forward over the bars of their machines. Politicians with cigars in the corners of their mouths held in impatient trotters. Park omnibuses heavily laden with women and children drew up for an instant before the Terrace, and then went on again to skirt the Lake. Old-fashioned and shabby landaus lumbered along with strangers from the hotels. Now and then there came in sight a hansom cab with a young couple framed in the front of it, or a jolting dog-cart, on the high seat of which a British-looking young

man was driving tandem. Here and there were other private carriages—coupés and phaetons, for the most part, with once and again a four-in-hand coach rumbling heavily on the firmly packed road.

A stylish victoria sped along, spick and span, with its glistening harness and its jingling steel chains, with its stalwart pair of iron-gray steppers and with two men on the box, correct and impassive. Suddenly, as it passed close to the walk at the end of the Terrace, the coachman drew up sharply, pulling his horses back on their haunches and swearing inaudibly at the plump Irishwoman who had dropped her basket of fruit just in time to rescue one of her children from being run over.

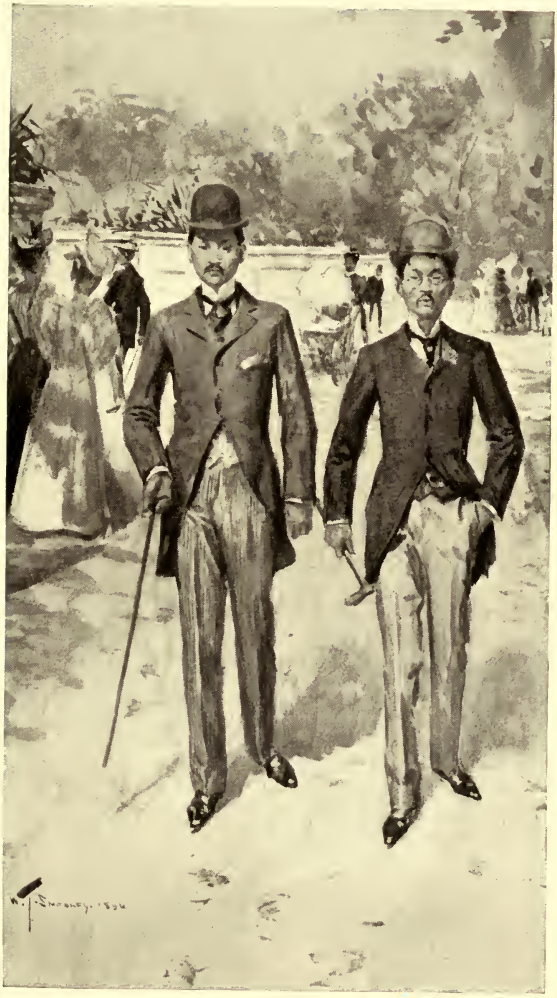
"It's more careful ye ought to be!" cried the mother, as she stood again on the walk with her daughter clasped to her waist.

"We are very sorry, indeed," said the lady in the victoria, leaning forward. "It was an accident."

"An accident, was it?" returned the Irishwoman. "An' it's an accident, then, ye wouldn't like if it was yer own children ye were runnin' over like that."

The childless couple in the carriage looked at each other for a moment only; and then the husband said, swiftly, "Drive on, John!"

He was a man of fifty, spare in frame and round-shouldered; he had a keen glance, and a



"TWO SLIM JAPANESE GENTLEMEN"

weary smile came and went on his lips, not hidden by his sparse gray moustache. His wife was a woman of perhaps thirty, tall, dark, with passionate eyes and a full figure.

She was still leaning forward, clinching the side of the carriage as it turned northward and rolled along by the side of the Lake. Her voice showed that her excitement had not subsided, as she faced her husband again and said: "John is getting very careless. That is the third time this week he has nearly run over a child!"

"He has not quite run over one yet. It will be time enough to discharge him when he does," her husband answered, calmly. "That little girl there is none the worse for her fright. She seemed a pretty little thing, and she has been saved to grow up in a tenement-house and to go to the devil ten years from now. So her mother has cause to be thankful."

His wife looked at him indignantly. "I suppose," she said, "you mean that it is a pity that John didn't run over the child and kill her."

"I didn't mean that exactly," he responded. "But perhaps it is true enough. Death is not the worst thing in this world, you know."

"You are always talking of dying," returned his young wife, impatiently. "I wonder you don't commit suicide."

"I have thought of it," he answered, looking at her with a tolerant smile. "But life amuses

me still—I have so much curiosity, you know. But I might do it, if I were sure I could have the privilege of coming back to see what you will be up to when I'm gone."

She looked straight before her and made no answer, keeping her lips firmly compressed.

There was a touch of tenderness in his tone as he went on, a curious cynical tenderness, quite characteristic of him. "Don't let some rascal marry you for my money. That would annoy me, I confess. And yet, I don't know why I should suggest the possibility of such a thing, for you will be a most fascinating widow."

She gazed ahead steadily and said nothing, but she had joined her hands together, and her fingers kept moving.

"Still," he continued, "I'm afraid I'm good for ten years more. We're a hardy stock, you know. My father lived to be eighty, and he was fifty when I was born. Besides, you take such good care of me always."

He held out his hand to her, and she took it and clasped it tight in both of hers, while the tears brimmed her eyes.

"But perhaps you are letting me stay out too long this afternoon," he said. "It is balmy, I know, but I'm getting tired already."

"John," she cried, hastily, "you may turn now, and go home."

"I don't want you to lose this lovely September afternoon," her husband declared. "Take me

"A KNOT OF LAUGHING MULATTO GIRLS"

home, and come back to the Park here for an hour, while I have a nap, if I can."

Just then there was a break in the stream of vehicles, and the coachman took advantage of it and turned the horses' heads southward. In five minutes the victoria swerved to the westward, leaving the Lake behind, and making for the Riverside Drive.

The Lake was gay with boats. Black gondolas with white canopies and brilliant American flags were propelled adroitly by their standing boatmen. Light canoes were paddled briskly in and out of the bays and channels, where the ducks and swans swam lazily about. Young fellows in their shirt-sleeves tugged inexpertly at the oars of row-boats laden down with young women. By regular and easy strokes the Park watermen rowed the capacious barges, with their striped awnings, in the prescribed course around the Lake. The oars flashed in the flickering sunlight, and the sunshine gilded the prows of the distant canoes as they shot across the vista. The yellow leaves of the maples high on the bank over the opposite shore fluttered loosely away on the doubtful breeze, and at last fell languidly into the water. To the west a towering apartment-house lifted itself aloft over the edge of the Park, and seemed to shorten the space between. To the east the gilded dome of a new synagogue rose over the tree-tops. Above all was the blue concave of the calm and illimitable sky.

When the victoria, with its two men on the box and with its pair of high-stepping horses, returned to the Park, and skirted the Lake again, and approached the Terrace, the lady sat in it alone. As she came in sight of the Mall she bent forward, eagerly looking for the little girl whom they had almost run over half an hour earlier.

Near the Terrace she saw the pleasant-faced Irishwoman, with her basket of fruit in one hand and the baby in the other arm; the three little children were playing about their mother's feet, while the elder boy and girl were only a few yards away.

The lonely woman in the victoria bade the coachman draw up.

Seeing the carriage stop at the side of the road the Irishwoman came forward, proffering her fruit. Then she recognized the lady and checked her approach, hesitating.

The handsome woman in the carriage smiled, and said, "Which is the little girl we almost ran over?"

"That's the one," answered the mother, indicating the slip of a child who was now clasping the edge of the fruit-basket while staring at the strange lady with wide-open eyes.

"What a pretty child she is!" said the lady. "I hope she is none the worse for her fright?"

"Ye didn't break any bones, if that's what ye mean," the mother responded.

"And how old is she?" was the next question.

"She'll be three years old come Christmas," was the answer.

The lady in the carriage felt in her pocket, and brought out her purse and looked through it.

"Here," she said at last, as she took out a five-dollar gold-piece ; "here is something I wish you would give her on Christmas morning as a present from me. Will you ?"

"I will that," the mother replied, taking the money, "and gladly too. It's richer than her sisters she'll be now."

"How many children have you ?" the lady inquired.

"Six ; thank ye, ma'am, for askin'," was the response, "an' all well and hearty."

"Six ?" echoed the woman in the victoria, with a hungry gleam in her eyes. "You have six children ?"

"It's six I have," the mother answered ; "and it's a fine lot they are altogether, though I say it that shouldn't."

The lady put her hand in her purse again.

"Buy something with this for the others," she said, placing a bank-note in the Irishwoman's hands. Then she raised her voice and added, "You may drive on, John !"

As the victoria rolled away to the westward the fruit-vender courtesied, and the children all looked after the carriage with interest.

"That lady must be very rich," said the eldest boy, the one who had the lozenges for sale. "I

shouldn't wonder if she had two millions of dollars!"

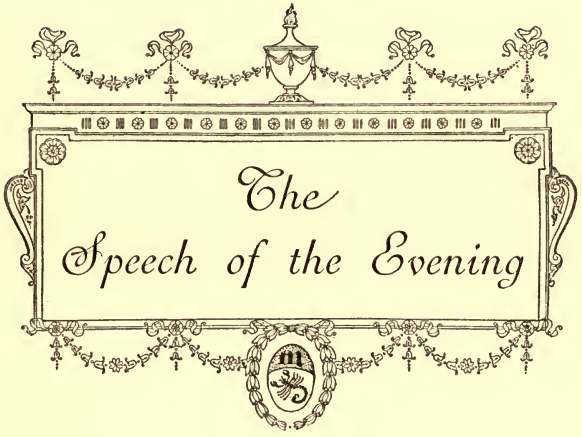
"She must be very happy," the eldest girl added. "I suppose she can have ice-cream every day, and go to the Seaside Home for two weeks whenever she wants."

"It's a kind heart she has anyway, for all her money," was the mother's comment, as she unfolded the bank-note and saw the X in the corner of it.

Meanwhile the lady in the victoria was eaten with bitter thoughts as the carriage rattled along in the brilliant sunshine beneath the unclouded sky.

"Six children!" she was saying to herself. "That Irishwoman has six children! Why is it that some women have so much luck?"

(1893.)


The
Speech of the Evening

THE more immaterial part of the banquet was about to begin. The guests had made an end of eating, and the waiters were filling the small cups with black coffee, and passing boxes of cigars and cigarettes. At the five long tables which gridironed the great room the hum of conversation rose higher and higher; while at the shorter table, raised on the platform at the western end of the hall, there was almost silence, as the men who were to make speeches saw the oratorical moment approaching. The musicians, hidden behind a screen of greenery, were playing a medley of the latest popular airs; and here and there, at the tables below, a little group of the diners now and again took up a chorus, with intermittent energy, to the amusement of the ladies who were arriving and filling rapidly the broad boxes in the galleries.

The organizers of the dinner had felt that it was a great occasion, and they had sought to make it memorable artistically. The severe white of the beautifully proportioned concert-hall was relieved by foliage plants, massed and scattered with a delicate understanding of decorative ef-

fect; against the absolutely colorless walls, with their carved caryatides, were palms in pots; gayly colored silken banners floated down from the ceiling; and everywhere, on the ceiling and the walls and the balconies and the platforms, the electric lights glowed and twinkled, illuminating the lofty hall with steady brilliancy.

Near the eastern end of one of the long tables there sat a young man—at least, he was barely thirty. He was so placed that he had before him the whole scene. He had an uninterrupted view of the raised table, where the speakers were absorbed in self-communion. He commanded the entrance to the gallery opposite, and he could see the ladies as they arrived in little groups, eager for the unwonted pleasure of attendance at a great public dinner. He could hear the feminine chatter rising shrill above the masculine babble below. He gazed at the boxes curiously, as though he did not know any of the ladies in them; and he remained quiet while the diners about him at that end of the table exchanged salutations with the occupants of one box or another. Apparently he had few if any acquaintances even on the floor of the hall, the men on each side of him being generally engaged in conversation with their neighbors.

Seemingly his solitude was lightly borne, and he found solace for it in amused observation of the gathering. He lighted his own cigar, and was soon helping to make the blue haze which

hung over the tables, rising in time almost to the level of the boxes in the long balconies.

Yet he was not averse to conversation, and when his right-hand neighbor turned back to pick up a fresh cigarette, he took occasion to say, "It isn't usual to let ladies in at dinners here in New York, is it?"

"No," his right-hand neighbor responded, with a slight but obvious German accent, "I don't think it is. I've been lifing in New York for a long vile now—'most eleven years—and I never saw it before."

Then the right-hand neighbor, having lighted his cigarette, sat back in his chair again and resumed his interrupted talk with the man on the other side of him.

The young man who was apparently a stranger was allowed to keep silence only for a minute or two, however, as his left-hand neighbor, to whom he had hardly spoken during the dinner, now engaged him in conversation.

"I thought it was about time they did that," said the neighbor, indicating the waiters who were removing the potted orange-trees and the sugar-trophies from the upper table. "Now we can see who's who."

"I suppose those are the more distinguished guests?" the young man suggested.

"Most of the men who are going to make speeches are up there," the neighbor responded. "Hello, hello! there's Alexander Macgregor down

at that end there, the one with the full red beard. He's the President of the St. Andrew's Society. He's a first-rate American, too, for all he was born in Edinburgh. You know, he's the man they call the 'Star-spangled Scotchman.'"

"And who is that clean-shaved, clean-looking, fair-haired man next to him?" asked the young man.

"That?" the neighbor replied, "that's—oh, I forget his name—but he's the President of the St. George's Society, I think. He's an Englishman—that is, he was; I suppose he's been naturalized—but then you can never tell about Englishmen, can you? They will live in a place for years, and they will be Britons to the backbone all the time."

"Who is the presiding officer?" was the next question.

"Don't you know *him?*" the neighbor retorted. "Why, that's Crowninshield Eliot, the lawyer. He used to be President of the New England Society. He's a clever man and he makes a rattling good speech sometimes, but then he's mighty uncertain. He may speak well or he may make a bad break. A speech from him is a regular grab-bag—you never know what you are going to have. But things don't get rusty when he is around, I tell you. You can rely on him to wake all the other speakers up. And I guess we shall have some fun before we get through; it isn't often you see so many representative New-

Yorkers together; it's really a typical gathering."

The young man made no response to this, being for the moment busy with his own ironic thoughts.

"Now there's a man who will make the fur fly if he gets a chance," continued the loquacious neighbor, "that tall, thin, dignified-looking man, with the black goatee and mustache; that's Colonel Fairfax. He's Secretary of the Southern Society—all rebels, you know, but reconstructed by this time, most of them. He's District Attorney for the second term now, and you ought to hear him talk to a jury. He could get a verdict against the angel Gabriel for stealing the silver trumpet. When I was on the grand jury last year he—"

Here the young man's neighbor interrupted himself to say, "Hello, hello! that is odd, isn't it? Right next to Colonel Fairfax is the man who was foreman of our grand jury; I didn't catch sight of him till that waiter took away that candy Statue of Liberty. See him? The bald one with the scar on his jaw; it's a bullet wound he got at Shiloh. That's S. Colfax Morrison; he was major of the 200th Ohio, but he's been living in New York for ten years now at least. That's 'the Ohio idea' they talk about: to come to New York to live as soon as they can. I was born in Ohio myself."

And the talker let his loquacity taper off into a laugh, in which the young man joined courteously.

There was a sudden diminution of the roar of talk as the gentleman sitting in the middle of the raised table rose to his feet and rapped for silence. Even in the boxes, now filled to overflowing with ladies, the chatter ceased as the man who had been selected to preside over the dinner began his remarks by recalling the event they had met to commemorate. In felicitous phrases and with neatly turned strokes of humor he declared the reason why they were assembled together. And when he had made an end of this, he announced that the first toast of the evening would be "New York, the Empire City, sitting at the gates of commerce, and holding the highways of trade."

There was a burst of applause and a pushing back of chairs as all the guests rose with their glasses in their hands.

Then the presiding officer prepared to introduce the speaker who was to make the response to this important toast.

"I saw only this morning," he began again, "the report of some remarks made by a Senator from Nevada, in which New York was called a 'city of kites and crows.' There are Congressmen who cannot open their mouths without disseminating miscellaneous misinformation; and the only appropriate retort would be with the plain-spoken bowie of the mining-camp or with the unambiguous derringer of Nevada. No adequate answer is possible in the sterilized vocab-

ulary permitted to us by the conventions of modern society. And yet it is well that once in a while New York should assert herself—that she should celebrate herself — that she should rest from her mighty labors, if only for a moment, to contemplate her own great work. We are fortunate in having with us here to-night a man who can do justice to this imposing theme, a man who loves New York as we all love her, who is proud of New York as we are all proud of her—a man whom there is no need for me to introduce to an assembly of New-Yorkers. Works of supererogation are discountenanced, and who is there here who does not know Horace Chauncy?"

As the chairman ceased the gentleman who had been sitting at his right rose, and immediately there was great applause from all parts of the hall. Men clapped their hands and rapped upon the table with the handles of their fruit-knives. Even the ladies in the boxes waved their handkerchiefs.

Then, as the chairman, having done his duty, took his seat, there was the customary hum of anticipated enjoyment, dying away swiftly as Mr. Chauncy prepared to speak.

The left-hand neighbor of the young man down at the far end of the long table turned to him again, and said, "Now you keep your eyes open. I shouldn't wonder if this was the speech of the evening."

The young man looked at the new speaker and

liked his face, at once masterful and intelligent. Mr. Chauncy's attitude was one of conscious strength and of perfect ease. He was a man of fifty, perhaps, with gray hair and a curling gray mustache.

"Upon a mellow October night like this," the speaker began, and his voice was rich and firm, while his delivery was as clear as a line engraving — "upon a mellow October night like this, possible in no other city in this country or in Europe, I think, and illustrative of the fact that here in New York we have really a climate, while most of the other great towns of the world have only weather—upon a night like this, and under this graceful tower, uplifting its loveliness into the azure air and topped by a Diana fairer than that of the Ephesians smiling down upon gardens more beautiful than any ever hanging in Babylon, there is no need for me to present any defence of the Empire City, or to proffer any apology for her. If you seek for proof of her superiority, look about you here to-night, and remember that nowhere else in the United States could any such company as this be gathered together; nowhere else in the United States is there a banquet-hall so beautiful; nowhere else in the United States would a feast like this be graced by the presence of so many lovely women. Yet I feel that I should be derelict to my duty—that I should let slip a precious occasion—if I did not dwell for a while upon a few of the many things in the his-

"'NOWHERE ELSE WOULD A FEAST LIKE THIS BE GRACED BY SO MANY LOVELY WOMEN'"

tory of this city which give her proud pre-eminence; which make her what she is—the mighty and magnificent metropolis of a great people."

Again the applause broke forth. After a pause the speaker continued, having the attention of every man and woman in the hall. Even as he warmed to his subject he preserved the perfection of his delivery, and he poured forth facts, figures, illustrations, one after the other, with never a broken accent or a blurred syllable.

"I will not detain you by detailing the many natural advantages of New York—the noble river which sweeps by on one side and the arm of the ocean which embraces the other, and the spacious and beautiful bay, with its harborage ample for all the fleets of all the nations of the earth. It is not my purpose to-night to linger long over the works of art which make this island of ours distinguished as the works of nature have made possible her prosperity; and therefore I shall say nothing of the Statue of Liberty, of the Brooklyn Bridge, of the Riverside Drive, of the libraries and the museums and the colleges and the churches; I shall even say nothing of Central Park, truly the finest single work of art yet produced by any American, and, simply as a work of art, unequalled by any pleasure-ground of Europe."

There was another burst of applause, but the speaker scarcely waited for it to die down before he began again.

"Passing by these works of God and man, ever

present before our eyes, I am going to call your attention to things less material—to things which do not cling to our remembrance as they ought. Secure in our material prosperity, we New-Yorkers do not always recall those incidents in the history of the city which deserve to be forever memorable. We are not often accused of modesty—but we are over-modest, are we not?—when we allow our children to be taught that the first bloodshed of the Revolution was in the Boston Massacre, forgetting that the Liberty Pole fight took place in New York six weeks earlier. It was here in New York that the Stamp Act Congress met, the forerunner of the federation of the American colonies which cast off the British yoke. And in the long and weary war of the Revolution only one of the thirteen colonies furnished its full quota of men, money, and supplies—and that colony was the colony of New York!"

Once more was the speaker interrupted by a tumult of approval; and once more he went on again as soon as he could make himself heard.

"When the critical period in the history of this country came—that is, when the need of a new constitution was felt by all—no men had a larger share in the making of that constitution than two New-Yorkers, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay, while the nervous English of that great instrument was due to a third New-Yorker, Gouverneur Morris. It was in New York that the foundations of American literature were laid, by the pub-

lication of *Knickerbocker's History*, the earliest book to be printed in America which keeps its popularity to-day — and more than fourscore years have not yet tarnished its humor. To the author of this immortal book, to Washington Irving, was due the first work of American authorship which won acceptance outside of the boundaries of the United States. And as it was the *Sketch-Book* of Washington Irving which was the first American book to win its way in England, so it was the *Spy* of another citizen of New York, Fenimore Cooper, which was the first American book to achieve fame outside of the English language. It was here in New York that our American literature was first fostered, as it is here in New York that our American authors are most abundant, most highly honored, and most richly rewarded."

The speaker paused again, but only for a moment.

"As in letters, so in the arts. Here in New York the National Academy of Design was founded, and later the Society of American Artists; and to two painters of New York, to Robert Fulton and to Samuel F. B. Morse, we owe the steamboat and the telegraph. Here in New York was founded the Children's Aid Society—than which no city in the world has a nobler charity—the first of the kind and the most successful. Here in New York, also, Peter Cooper established the first institution intended to provide instruc-

tion to all ambitious youth—an institution that has been imitated in almost every city of the Union, although no city of the Union has ever had a citizen more esteemed or better beloved than was Peter Cooper here in New York. It is not in 'a city of kites and crows' that men of Peter Cooper's character choose to dwell; it is not in 'a city of kites and crows' that men of Peter Cooper's character are cherished and revered."

Here the speech was again broken into by prolonged applause. Men rose to their feet and cheered, waving their napkins over their heads.

When there was quiet once more the speaker went on:

"After years of peace and of prosperity, the people of the United States suddenly found themselves face to face with armed rebellion, and war loomed before us inevitable. New York was ready then as always. The first regiment to reach the capital of the country—to secure it against traitors—was a regiment of New York City militia. Nor was there ever after any lack of men here in this city who despised the snares of death and defied the pains of hell, and who went into battle bravely, and gayly, and glad that —in the words of one of them—glad that 'there is lots of good fighting along the whole line.' I have been told—I confess I have not been able to verify the figures—but I have been told, that the number of men who enlisted into the army

and the navy of the United States from this city of ours during those four long years of doubt and anxiety exceeded the number of the male inhabitants of fighting age in the year when the rebellion broke out. And not content with furnishing men to fight, the city of New York saw to it that the wounded were duly attended to and their anguish lightened as far as might be—for it was here that the United States Sanitary Commission was organized."

There where cheers once more and yet again, and it was not for a full minute that the speaker was enabled to continue.

"Your applause tells me that I need say no more," he began. "A successful city is the spoiled child of fortune, and perhaps, like other spoiled children, it is all the better for a sound thrashing now and then. But what has New York done amiss now, that she should be scourged with scorpions? In the welter of politics it may be considered adroit to suggest that your opponent is either a wolf in sheep's clothing or an ass in a lion's skin; but it is more adroit still, it seems to me, to avoid personality altogether. The louder the report of the gun, the more violent the kick is. When a New-Yorker hears his beloved town called 'a city of kites and crows' his first impulse is to laugh; his second is to inquire as to the man who said it; and his third is to laugh again and louder when he discovers that the author of this assertion is from Nevada, a state where even

Santa Claus on Christmas Eve does not dare go his rounds for fear of being held up by road-agents!"

This time a burst of hearty laughter mingled with the abundant applause as the speaker sat down.

"That's a very good speech," the young man who seemed to be a stranger said to his left-hand neighbor.

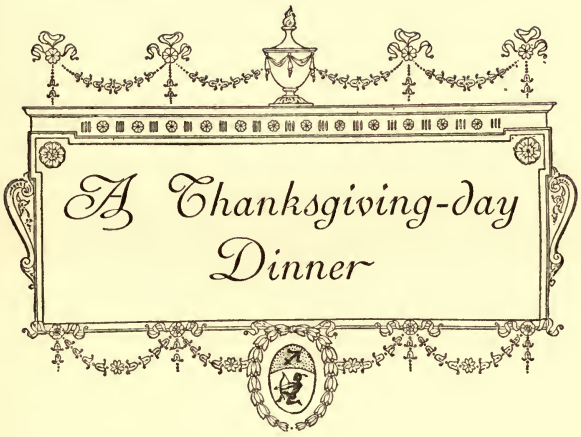
"Good speech?" echoed the other enthusiastically; "I should think so. It's the speech of the evening, sure! There's not one of them can beat that."

"I've been in Japan for the past five years, and I seem to have lost track of people here in the city," said the young man. "What is the name of the gentleman who made the speech?"

"Horace Chauncy," was the answer. "I thought everybody knew him. His father was United States Senator from West Virginia, and his mother was a famous Kentucky belle in her day. He himself used to be the leader of the California bar before he moved here a few years ago. He caught on at once in New York; he's one of the most popular speakers we have now; some fellows call him 'Our Horace.' Haven't you ever heard about him, really?"

"Well," the young man retorted, "you mustn't expect me to know all these people. You see, I was born in New York."

(1894.)


A Thanksgiving-day
Dinner

THANKSGIVING DAY had dawned clear and cold, an ideal day for the foot-ball game. Soon after breakfast the side-streets had been made hideous by small bands of boys, strangely disguised as girls some of them, or as Indians and as negroes, with improvised costumes and with staring masks; they blew fish-horns, and besought coppers. A little later in the day groups of fantasticals paraded on horseback or in carriages; and straggling target companies — some of them in the uniforms worn during the political campaign which had culminated in the election three weeks earlier—marched irregularly up the avenues under the elevated railroads, preceded by thin lines of pioneers, and by slim bands of music that played spasmodically before the many adjacent saloons, at the doors of which the companies came to a halt willingly.

The sun shone out and warmed one side of the street as people came from church; and the wind blew gently down the avenues, and fluttered the petals of the yellow chrysanthemums which expanded themselves in many button-holes. Little groups of young people passed, the girls with

knots of blue at their throats or with mufflers of orange and black, the young men with college-buttons or with protruding handkerchiefs of the college colors. The fashionable dealers in men's goods had arranged their windows with impartial regard for future custom—one with blue flannels and scarfs, shirts and socks, and the other all orange and black. Coaches began to go by, draped with one set of colors or the other, and filled with young men who split the air with explosive cheers, while waving blue pennants with white letters, or yellow pennants with black. The sun shone brightly, and the brisk breeze shivered the bare branches of the trees. It rippled the flags which projected from the vehicles gathering at Madison Square and streaming up the avenue in thick succession — coaches, private carriages, omnibuses, road-wagons of one kind or another.

Towards nightfall the tide turned and the coaches began to come back, the young men hoarse with incessant shouting of their staccato college cries. Some of them, wild with joy at the victory of their own team, had voice still for exulting yells. Others were saddened into silence by the defeat of their side. Most of those who had gone out to see the game belonged neither to the college of the blue nor to the college of the black and orange, but they were all stimulated by the struggle they had just seen—a struggle of strength and of skill, of gumption and of grit. The sun had gone down at last. and the

COMING FROM CHURCH

bracing breeze of noon had now a touch of dampness which chilled the flesh. But the hearty young fellows paid no heed to it; they cheered and they sang and they cried aloud one to the other as though the season were spring, and they were alone on the sea-shore.

Robert White caught the fever like the rest, and as he walked down the avenue to the College Club he was conscious of an excitement he had not felt for years. He was alone in the city for a week, as it happened, his wife having taken the children into the country for a long-promised visit; and he had been spending his evenings at the College Club. So it was that he had joined in chartering a coach, and for the first time in a dozen years he had seen the foot-ball game. He had been made happy by the success of his own college, and by meeting classmates whom he had not laid eyes on since their Commencement in the heat of the Centennial summer. One of them was now the young governor of a new Western State, and another was likely to be a member of the new President's cabinet.

On the way out to the game White had sat beside a third classmate, now a professor in the old college, and they had talked over their four years and their fellow-students. They recalled the young men of promise who had failed to sustain the hopes of the class; the steady, hard-working fellows, who were steady and hard-working still; the quiet, shy man who had known little Latin

and less Greek, but was fond of science, and who was now developing into one of the foremost novelists of the country; the best base-ball player of the class, now the pastor of one of the leading churches of Chicago; and others who had done well for themselves in the different walks of life. They talked over the black sheep of the class—some dead, some worse than dead, some dropped out of sight.

"What has become of Johnny Carroll?" asked the professor.

"I have not seen him since class-day. There was some wretched scandal before Commencement, you know, and I doubt if Johnny ever got his degree," White answered.

"I know he didn't," the professor returned. "He never dared to apply for it."

"They managed to keep the trouble very quiet, whatever it was," White went on. "I never knew just what the facts were."

"I didn't know then," responded the professor; "I have been told since. But there is no need to go into that now. The girl is dead long ago, and Johnny too, for all I have heard."

"Poor Johnny Carroll," White said; "I can remember how handsome he looked that last night, the night of class-day. But he was always handsome and always well dressed. He was not very clever or very anything, was he? Yet we all liked him."

"I remember that he tried to get on the Fresh-

man crew," the professor remarked, after a pause, "but the temptations of high living were too much for him. He wouldn't train."

"Training was just what he needed most," White added; "moral and mental as well as physical. Fact is, he always had more money than was good for him. His father was in Wall Street then, and making money hand over fist."

"It wasn't till the year after we were graduated that old Carroll committed suicide, was it?" the professor inquired. "Blew out his brains in the bath-tub, didn't he?"

"And didn't leave enough money to pay for his funeral," White answered. "Johnny was in hard luck always: he had too much money at first, and none at all when he needed it most."

"His great misfortune," said the professor, "was that his father was 'one of the boys.'"

"Yes," White agreed, "that is pretty rough on a fellow. I wonder where Johnny is, if he is alive? Out West, perhaps, prospecting on a grub stake, or else stoker on an ocean steamer, or perhaps he's a member of the Broadway squad, earning a living by elbowing ladies over the crossing."

"I hope he has as good a berth as that," the professor answered; "but I don't believe that Johnny Carroll would stay on the force long, even if he got the appointment. Do you remember how well he sang 'The Son of a Gamboleer'?"

It was this question of the professor's which Robert White remembered after he had got off

the coach and was walking towards Madison Square. Three young fellows, mere boys two of them, were staggering on just in front of him. They were arm in arm, in hope of a triplicate stability quite unattainable without more ballast than they carried, and they were singing the song Johnny Carroll had made his own in college. The wind was still sharpening, and the wooden signs which projected across the sidewalk here and there swung heavily as they felt its force. There were knots of eager young men and boys going to and fro before the brilliantly lighted porticos of the hotels.

As White stepped aside to get out of the way of one of these groups, rather more hilarious than the others, he knocked into a man who was standing up against the glaring window of a restaurant. The man was thin and pinched ; his face was cleanshaven and blue ; his clothes were threadbare ; his attitude was as though he were pressing close to the glass in the hope of a reflected warmth.

"I beg your pardon," cried White.

The man turned stiffly. "It's of no con—" he began, then he saw White's face in the bright light which streamed across the sidewalk. He stopped, hesitated for a moment, and then turned away.

The moment had been enough for White to recognize him. "Johnny Carroll !" he called.

The man continued to move away.

White overtook him in two strides, and laid a hand on his shoulder. "Johnny !" he said again.

The man faced about and answered doubtfully, "Well, what do you want?"

"Is this really you, Johnny Carroll?" asked White, as he held out his hand.

"Oh yes," said the other, "it's Johnny Carroll —and you are Bob White."

White's hand was still extended. After a long pause his classmate took it. White was shocked at the chill of Carroll's fingers. "Why, man," he cried, "you are cold."

"Well," the other answered, simply, "why not? It isn't the first time." Then, after a swift glance at White's face, he turned his own away and said, "I'm hungry, too, if you want to know."

"So am I," said White, cordially. "I was going to have my Thanksgiving dinner alone. Will you join me, Johnny?"

"Do you mean it?" asked the other.

"Why shouldn't we dine together?" White responded, setting off briskly and putting his arm through his classmate's. "Our team has won today, you know—eighteen to nothing; we'll celebrate the victory."

"Where are you taking me?" inquired Johnny, uneasily.

"To the College Club, of course," answered White. "We'll—"

"I mustn't go there," said Johnny, stopping short. "I couldn't face them now. I—oh, I couldn't!"

"Very well, then," White agreed. "Where

shall we go? What do you say to Delmonico's?"

Again Johnny asked: "Do you mean it? Honest?"

"Of course I mean it, Johnny," he replied.

"I haven't been in Delmonico's for ten years and more," said the other. "I'd like to have just another dinner there. But you can't take me there. Look at me!"

White looked at him. The thin coat was buttoned tight; it was very worn, and yet it was not ragged; it was in better condition than the hat or the boots.

As the two men stood there facing each other on the corner of the street there was a foretaste of winter in the wind which smote them and ate into their marrow.

White linked his arm again in his classmate's. "I've seen you look sweller, Johnny, I confess," he said; "but I haven't dressed for dinner myself to-night."

"So it's Delmonico's?" Johnny asked.

"It's Delmonico's," White responded.

"Then take me into the café," said the other. "I can stand the men, I think, but I'm not in shape to go into the restaurant where the women are."

"Very well," agreed White. "We'll try the café."

When they entered the café it was crowded with young men. There was already a blue haze

of smoke over the heads of the noisy throng. Boys drinking champagne at adjacent tables were calling across to each other with boisterous merriment.

White was able to secure a small table near the corner on the Broadway side. As he walked over to it he nodded to half a score of acquaintances, some of whom looked askant at his companion, and exchanged whispered comments after he had passed.

Apparently Johnny neither saw the looks nor heard the whispers. He followed White as if in a dream; and White had noticed that when they had entered the heated room Carroll had drawn a long breath as though to warm himself.

"I don't need an overcoat in here," he said, as he took the chair opposite White's with the little marble-topped table between them.

When the waiter had deftly laid the cloth, Johnny fingered its fair softness, as with a cat-like enjoyment of its cleanness.

"Now, what shall we have?" asked White, as the waiter handed him the bill of fare in its narrow frame. "What would you like?"

"I?" the guest responded; "oh, anything—whatever you want—some roast beef."

"Then your taste has changed since you left college," White declared. "I asked you what you would *like*."

"What *I'd* like?" echoed Johnny. "Do you mean it? Honest?"

White smiled as the old college phrase dropped again from the lips of his classmate.

"Of course I mean it," he said; "honest. There's the bill of fare. Order what you please. And remember that it is Thanksgiving, and that I'm hungry, and that I want a good dinner."

"Very well, then," said Johnny, as he took the bill of fare. He was already warmer, and now he seemed to expand a little with the unwonted luxury of the occasion.

He looked over the bill of fare carefully.

"Blue Points on the half-shell, of course," he began, adding to the waiter, "be sure that they are on the deep shell. Green turtle soup — the green turtle here used to be very good fifteen years ago. *Filet de sole, à la Mornay*—the sole is flounder, I suppose, but *à la Mornay* a man could eat a Hebrew manuscript. Then a canvas-back apiece — two canvas-back, you understand, real canvas-back, not red-head or mallard—with samp, of course, and a mayonnaise of celery. Then a bit of Chedder cheese and a cup of coffee. How will that suit you, White?"

"That will suit me," White responded. "And now what wine?"

"Wine, too?" Johnny queried.

White smiled and nodded.

"Well, I'll go you," the guest went on. "I might as well see the thing through, if you are bound to do it in style." He turned over the bill of fare and scanned the wine list on the under

"WHITE SECURED A SMALL TABLE NEAR THE CORNER"

side. "Yquem '74 with the oysters; and they tell me there is a Silver Seal Special '84 *brut* that is better than anything one has tasted before. Give us a quart of that with the duck. And let us have it as soon as you can."

He handed the bill of fare to the waiter, and then, for the first time, he ventured to glance about the room.

The oysters were brought very soon, and when Johnny had eaten them and part of a roll, and when he had drunk two glasses of the Yquem, White said to him: "Tell me something about yourself. What have you been doing all these years?"

Johnny's face fell a little. "I've done pretty nearly everything," he answered, "from driving a Fifth Avenue stage to keeping books for a Third Avenue pawnbroker. I've been a waiter at a Coney Island chowder saloon. Two summers ago I waited on the man who has just taken our order—I waited on him more than once. I've dealt faro, too."

The waiter brought the soup and served them.

When he left them alone again, White asked: "Can't some of your old friends help you out of this—give you a start and set you up again?"

"It's no good trying," Johnny replied. "You can't pull me up now. It's too late. I guess it was too late from the start."

"Why don't you drop this place?" White queried, "and go out West, and—"

"What's the use of talking about that?" Johnny interrupted. "I can't live away from New York. If I got out of sight of that tower over there I'd die."

"You will die here soon enough at this rate," White answered.

"That's so, too," admitted Johnny; "but it can't be helped now." He was eating steadily, sturdily, but not ravenously.

After the waiter had served the fish, White asked again, "What can we do for you?"

"Nothing," Johnny answered—"nothing at all. Yes, you can give me a five, if you like, or a ten; but don't give me your address, or the first time I'm down again I'd look you up and strike you for ten more."

A band of undergraduates, twenty of them or more, four abreast, arm in arm, went tramping down Broadway, yelling forth the chorus of a college song.

"You used to sing that song, Johnny," said White.

"I used to do lots of things," he answered, as the waiter opened the champagne.

"I never heard anybody get as much out of 'The Son of a Gamboleer' as you did," White continued.

"I joined a negro-minstrel troupe as second tenor twelve years ago, but we got stranded in Hartford, and I had to walk home. I've tried to do a song and dance in the Bowery dime muse-

AN IDEAL DAY FOR THE FOOT-BALL GAME

ums since then, more than once. But it's no use."

When they had made an end of the canvas-backs and the *brut* '84, Johnny sat back in his chair and smiled, and said, "Well, this was worth while."

Then the coffee came, and White said, "You forgot to order the liqueur, Johnny."

"You see what it is to be out of practice," he replied. "I'd like some orange curaçoa."

"And I will take a little green mint," said White to the waiter. "And bring some cigars—Henry Clays."

"That's right," Johnny declared. "My father was always a Henry Clay man, and I suppose that's why I like those cigars."

After the cigars were lighted White looked his companion square in the face. "Are you sure," he asked, "that we can do nothing for you?"

"Dead sure," was the answer.

"Nothing?"

"You have given me a good dinner," said Johnny. "That's enough. That's more than most of my old friends would give me. And there's nothing more to be done."

White held his peace for the moment.

Johnny took a long sip of his coffee, and drew three or four times at his cigar. "That's a first-rate cigar," he said. "I haven't smoked a Henry Clay for nearly two years, and then I picked up

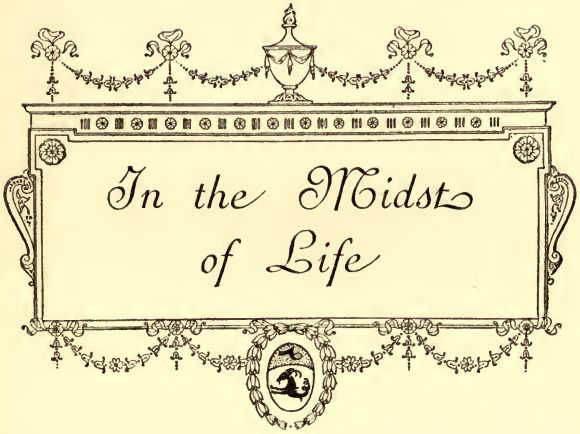
one a man had lighted, between the acts, outside of Daly's."

He puffed at it again with voluptuous appreciation, and then leaned across the table to White and remarked, confidentially, "Do you know, Bob, 'most everything I've cared for in this world has been immoral, or expensive, or indigestible."

"Yes," White admitted; "I suppose that's the cause of your bad luck."

"I've had lots of luck in my life," was the response, "good and bad—better than I deserved, most of it—this dinner, for example; I should remember it even without to-morrow's dyspepsia. But what's the use of anticipating evil? I'll let the next day take care of itself, and make the best of this one. There are several hours of it left—where shall we go now?"

(1892.)


In the Midst
of Life

IT was late in the afternoon when John Suydam turned into Twenty-third Street, and he remarked the absence of the gleam of color generally visible far away to the westward beyond the end of the street and across the river. There was no red vista that Christmas Eve, for the sky was overcast and lowering, and there was a damp chill in the air, a premonition of approaching snow. It was about the edge of dusk as he skirted Madison Square and saw the electric-lights twinkle out suddenly up and down Fifth Avenue, and in the square here and there.

The young man crossed Broadway, skilfully avoiding a huge express wagon, and springing lightly out of the path of a clanging cable-car. He crossed Fifth Avenue, threading his way through the carriages and the carts piled high with paper-covered packages. The white walls of the hotel on the opposite side of Twenty-third Street were dingy under the leaden sky as the haze of the swift twilight settled down. The wind died away altogether, and yet the atmosphere was raw and dank. Suydam bought an evening paper from the crippled newsboy who sat

in his rolling-chair, warmly wrapped against the weather, and seemingly cheerful and contented with his takings.

A few steps farther the young man passed an old French sailor standing on the curb-stone, and using his single hand to wind the machinery of a glazed box, wherein a ship was to be seen tossing on the regular waves while a train of cars kept crossing a bridge which spanned an estuary. Almost under the sailor's feet there was an old woman huddled in a dirty heap over a tiny hand-organ, from which she was slowly grinding a doubtful and dolorous tune. By her side, but a little beyond, two boys were offering for sale green wreaths and stars and ropes of greenery, to be used in festooning. Close to the broad windows of a dry-goods store, whence a yellow light streamed forth, a tall, thin man had a board on a trestle, and on this portable table he was showing off the antics of a toy clown who tumbled artlessly down a steep flight of steps. The people who hurried past, with parcels under their arms, rarely stopped to look at the ship tossing on the waves, or to listen to the hesitating tune of the wheezy organ, or to buy a bit of green or a performing clown. Yet the open-air bazaar, as it might plainly be called, the out-door fair, extended all the way along the street, and on both edges of the sidewalk the fakirs were trying to gather in their scanty Christmas harvest.

Before John Suydam came to the corner of

Sixth Avenue the snow began at last to fall; the first flakes descended hesitatingly, scurried by a brief wind that sprang up for a minute or two, and then died away absolutely. After a while the snow thickened and fell faster, sifting down softly and silently, but filling the air under the electric-lights which were clustered at the corner, and reddening under the glare of the engines on the elevated railroad overhead, as the cars rushed along girt with swirling clouds of steam. The snow clustered upon the boughs of the unsold Christmas-trees which stood irregularly along the sidewalk before a florist's a few doors down Sixth Avenue, and by the time Suydam had turned the corner, they looked like the shrouded ghosts of balsam pines.

All along the avenue he had to make his way through the same crowds of belated Christmas shoppers, hurrying in and out of the overgrown stores, availing themselves of their last chance to buy gifts for the morrow; but as he advanced, the throng thinned a little, driven home perhaps by the snow-storm. Yet though the purchasers were fewer, the peddlers persisted. Suydam noted one old man, bent and shrivelled, and with a long gray beard, who had a tray before him hung on a strap over his shoulders, and on the narrow board were plaster figures of Santa Claus carrying aloft a branching Christmas-tree besprinkled with glittering crystalline flakes. Under the hood of the staircase of the station of the

elevated railroad he saw a little blind woman wrapped in a scant shawl, silently proffering half a dozen lead-pencils. And high over the centre of the roadway the snow-clad trains thundered up and down, with white plumes of steam trailing from the engines.

As Suydam neared Fourteenth Street he found the crowds compacting again; and at the corner there was a chaos of carriages, carts, and street-cars. The flights of stairs leading to the elevated railroad station were packed with people bearing bundles and boxes, most of them, ascending and descending with difficulty, jostling one another good-naturedly. Long lines of children of all ages spread along the wide plate-glass windows at the corner of one huge store, gazing wonderingly at a caravan of toy animals in gorgeous trappings, with chariots and palanquins, which kept circling around in front of painted palm-trees and gayly-decorated tents. The snow was now falling fast, but still the young ones looked admiringly and waited willingly, though their hats were whitened, and though the soft flakes melted on their capes and on their coats.

The mass of humanity clustering about these windows forced Suydam almost to the edge of the sidewalk; but this was the last crowd he had to make his way through. Lower down there were no solid groups, although the avenue was still thronged. He was able to quicken his pace. So he sped along, passing the butchers', where car-

casses of sheep and of beeves hung in line garlanded with ropes of evergreen ; passing the grocers', where the shelves were battlemented with cans of food ; passing the bakers', where bread and cakes, pies and crullers, were displayed in trays and in baskets. He glanced into the yellow windows of candy-stores, and saw the parti-colored sweetmeats temptingly spread out. He caught a glimpse of more than one dealer in *delicatessen* whose display of silver-clad sausage and heavy pasty and wicker-work flask was enough to stimulate the appetite of a jaded epicure. He saw the signs of a time of plenty, but no one knew better than John Suydam that just then there was truly a season of want.

Night had fallen before he reached the court-house, with its high roof and its lofty turret, before he came to the market, with its yawning baskets of vegetables and its long rows of pendent turkeys beneath the flaring jets of gas. He crossed the avenue and turned into a small street —not here at right angles to the thoroughfare, as are the most of the side streets of New York. At last he stopped before a little house, an old two-story building, worn with long use, and yet dignified in its decay. The tiny dwelling had a Dutch roof, with two dormer-windows ; and it had been built when the Dutch traditions of New Amsterdam were stronger than they are to-day.

The young man mounted the high stoop, on which the snow was now nearly half an inch

thick. He rang the bell twice with a measured interval between. The flying step of a girl was heard, and then the door was thrown open, and Suydam disappeared within the little old house.

As the door closed, the young man took the young woman in his arms and kissed her.

"Oh, John," she said, "it is so good of you to come on Christmas Eve. How did you manage to get away?"

"I've only two hours," he answered, "and I had to get something to eat, so I thought that perhaps you—"

"Of course we can," the girl interrupted. "And mother will be delighted. She has made one of her old-fashioned chicken pies, and it's ever so much too much for us two. It will be ready at six."

"Then I know where I'm going to get my dinner," her lover returned, as he followed her into the little parlor. "But I shall have to go back as soon as I've had it. I've told them that I think the office ought to be kept open till midnight, and I said I'd stay. It would be a sorrowful thing, wouldn't it, if any one who wants help couldn't get it on Christmas Eve?"

"And there must be many who want help this hard winter," said the girl. "I went as far as Broadway this afternoon, on an errand for mother, and I passed six beggars—"

"Oh, beggars—" he began.

"Yes, I know," she interrupted again. "I did

not give them anything, though it seemed so cruel not to. I knew what you thought about indiscriminate charity, and so I steeled my heart. And I suffered for it, too. I know I should have felt happier if I had given something to one or two of them."

"I suppose you did deprive yourself of the virtuous glow of self-satisfaction," Suydam admitted. "But that virtuous glow is too cheap to be valuable. If we want to help our neighbor really, we must practise self-sacrifice, and not purchase an inexpensive self-gratification at the cost of his self-respect."

"I should feel as though I wasn't spending Christmas if I didn't give away something," she protested.

"Exactly," he returned. "You haven't yet freed yourself from the pestilent influence of Dickens, though you have much more sense, too, than nine women out of ten. You have blindly followed the belief that you ought to give for your own sake, without thinking whether it was best for the beggar to receive. Dickens's Christmas stories are now breeding their third generation of paupers; and I doubt if we can convince the broad public of the absurdity of his sociology in another half-century. It takes science to solve problems; hysteric emotionalism won't do it."

"You don't think all the beggars I saw to-day were humbugs, do you?" she asked.

"There isn't one chance in ten that any one of

the half-dozen is really in need," he answered; "and probably five out of the six have taken to begging partly out of laziness, and partly because they can beg larger wages than they can earn honestly."

"But there was one old man; he must have been forty, at least," urged the girl, "who was positively starving. Why, just as I turned out of Broadway, I saw him spring down to the gutter and pick up a crust of bread and begin to eat it greedily. I felt in my pocket for my purse, of course, but a gentleman had seen it, too, and he went up to the man and talked to him and gave him a five-dollar bill. Now, there was a real case of distress, wasn't it?"

Suydam smiled, sadly. "The starving man was about forty, you say? Tall and thin, wasn't he, with a thin, pointed beard, and a mark on his right cheek?"

The girl looked at him in wonder. "Why, how did you know?" she cried.

"That's Scar-faced Charley," he answered.

"And is he a humbug, too?" she asked.

"I followed him for two hours one afternoon last week," he explained, "and I saw him pick up that bit of bread and pretend to eat it at least twenty times. When I had him arrested he had more than ten dollars in his pockets."

"Well," the young woman declared, "I shall never believe in anybody again."

"But I don't see how it is Scar-faced Charley

is out to-day," Suydam went on. "We had him sent up for a month only, for the judge was easy with him. If he's out again so soon, I suppose he must have a pull of some sort. Those fellows often have more influence than you would think."

"He took me in completely," the girl admitted. "If Scar-faced Charley, as you call him, can act so well, why doesn't he go on the stage and earn an honest living?"

"That's the first thing that astonished me when I went to live in the University Settlement last spring, and began to study out these things for myself. I found beggars who were fond of their profession, and who prided themselves on their skill. What are you to do with them? And if you let them ply their trade, how are you going to distinguish them from those who are really in need?"

"It is all very puzzling to me," the girl confessed. "Since I've heard you talk, charity doesn't seem half as simple as it used to."

"No," said Suydam, "it isn't simple. In fact, it is about as complicated and complex a problem as the twentieth century will have to solve. But I'm coming to one conclusion fast, and that is that the way to tell those who need help from those who don't need it is, that the latter ask for it, and the former won't. New York is rich and generous, and there's never any difficulty about getting money enough to relieve every case of distress in the city limits—none whatever. The real difficulty is in getting the money to the peo-

ple who really need it, and in keeping it from the people who ought not to have it. You see that those who ask for assistance don't deserve it—not once in fifty times; and those who deserve it won't ask for it. There are men and women—women especially—who will starve before they will face the pity of their fellows. Every day I hear of cases of suffering borne silently, and discovered only by accident."

"I've been wondering for a week if we haven't one of those cases in this house now," said the girl.

"In this house?" the young man repeated.

"I've been meaning to tell you all about it every day," she went on, "but I've seen so little of you, and when you do come we have so many things to talk about, you know."

"I know," Suydam repeated. He was seated by her side on the sofa, and his arm was around her waist. He drew her closer to him and kissed her. "Now tell me about your case of distress," he said.

"Well," the girl began, "this house is too big for mother and me alone, so we let one room on the top floor to two old ladies. They have been here since before Thanksgiving. They are foreigners—Cubans, I think. The mother must be seventy, and I can see she has been very handsome. The daughter is nearly fifty, I'm sure; and a more devoted daughter you never saw. She waits on her mother hand and foot. They didn't bring any baggage to speak of—no trunk, only just a little bag—and we saw at once that they

were very, very poor. They paid two weeks' rent in advance, and since then they've paid two weeks' more. A fortnight ago the daughter told mother that they would be obliged if she would let them defer paying the rent for a little while, as a letter they were expecting had not come. And I suppose that was so, for the postman never whistled but the daughter came running down stairs to see if there wasn't something for them. But it hasn't come yet, and I don't believe they've got enough money to get things to eat, hardly. The daughter used to go out every morning, and come back with a tiny little parcel. You see, there's a gas-stove in their room, and they do their own cooking. But she hasn't been out of the house for two days, and we haven't seen either of them since the day before yesterday, when the daughter came to the head of the stairs and asked if there was a letter for her mother. We can hear them moving about overhead gently, but we haven't seen them. And now we don't really know what to do. I'm so glad you've come, for I told mother I was going to ask you about them."

"Do you think they have no money?" Suydam asked.

"I'm afraid it's all gone," she answered. "And they have no friends at all so far as we know."

"You say they are Cubans?"

"I think they are. Their name is De los Rios—Señora de los Rios, I heard the daughter call her mother when she asked the postman about a letter."

"If it wasn't so late," said the young man, looking at his watch, "I would go to the Spanish Consulate. But it's nearly six now, and the consulate is certain to be closed. If there is any reason to think that they are actually suffering for want of food, can't you find some feminine reason for intruding on them."

"I'm afraid we can't," she answered. "We did try yesterday morning. When we found that the daughter didn't go out for something to cook, we misdoubted they might be hungry, and so we talked it over and over, and did our best to hit on some way of helping them. At last mother had an idea, and she made a sort of Spanish stew—what they call an *olla podrida*, you know. She got the receipt out of the cook-book, and she took it up and knocked at the door. They asked who it was, and they didn't open the door but a little. Mother told the daughter that she had been trying to make a Spanish dish, and she didn't know as she'd got it right, and so she'd come up to ask them as a favor if they wouldn't taste it, and tell her if it was all right. You see that was mother's idea. She thought she might get them to eat it that way, and save their pride. But it wouldn't do. The daughter said that she was sorry, but she couldn't taste it then, she couldn't, nor her mother either. They had no appetite then, and so they couldn't judge of the *olla podrida*. She said they had just been cooking some chops and steaks."

"Chops and steaks?" echoed Suydam.

"That's what she said," the girl continued. "But of course that was only her excuse for refusing. That was her way of impressing on mother that they didn't need anything. So mother had to give it up, and bring the stew down-stairs again. Mother doesn't feel so badly about them, however, because they had been cooking something yesterday. She smelt fish—yesterday was Friday, you know."

"I know," repeated the young man; "but still I—"

Just then the shrill whistle of the postman was heard, and a sharp ring at the bell.

The girl jumped up, and went to the door. As she opened it there came in the faint melody of distant sleigh-bells, and the roar of the street already muffled by the snow.

She returned to the parlor with a long blue envelope in her hand.

"Here is the letter at last," she said.

"What letter?" asked Suydam.

"The letter the old ladies are waiting for," she answered, handing it to him.

He held it up nearer the single gas-jet of the parlor and read the address aloud, "'Marquisa de los Rios,' and it's registered."

"Yes," the girl returned, "and the postman is waiting to have the receipt signed. He said he guessed it was money or a Christmas present of some sort, since it had so many seals on it. I wanted you to know about it; but I'll take it right up now."

She tripped lightly up-stairs, and John Suydam heard her knocking at the door of the room the two old ladies occupied. After an interval she rapped again, apparently without response. Then he heard her try the door gently.

Two seconds later her voice rang out in a cry of alarm: "Mother! mother! Oh, John!"

Suydam sprang up-stairs, and found her just outside of the door of the old ladies' room. She was trembling, and she gripped his hand.

"Oh, John," she said, "something terrible has happened! It was even worse than I thought! They really were starving!"

Then she led him silently into the room, where her mother joined them almost immediately.

After waiting five minutes the postman at the front door below became impatient. He rang the bell sharply and whistled again. He was kicking the snow off his boots and swinging his arms to keep warm, when at last the door opened and John Suydam appeared, with the long blue envelope in his hand.

"I'm afraid that you will have to take this letter away again," Suydam said to the postman. "There is no one here now to sign for it. The Marquisa de los Rios is dead!"

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